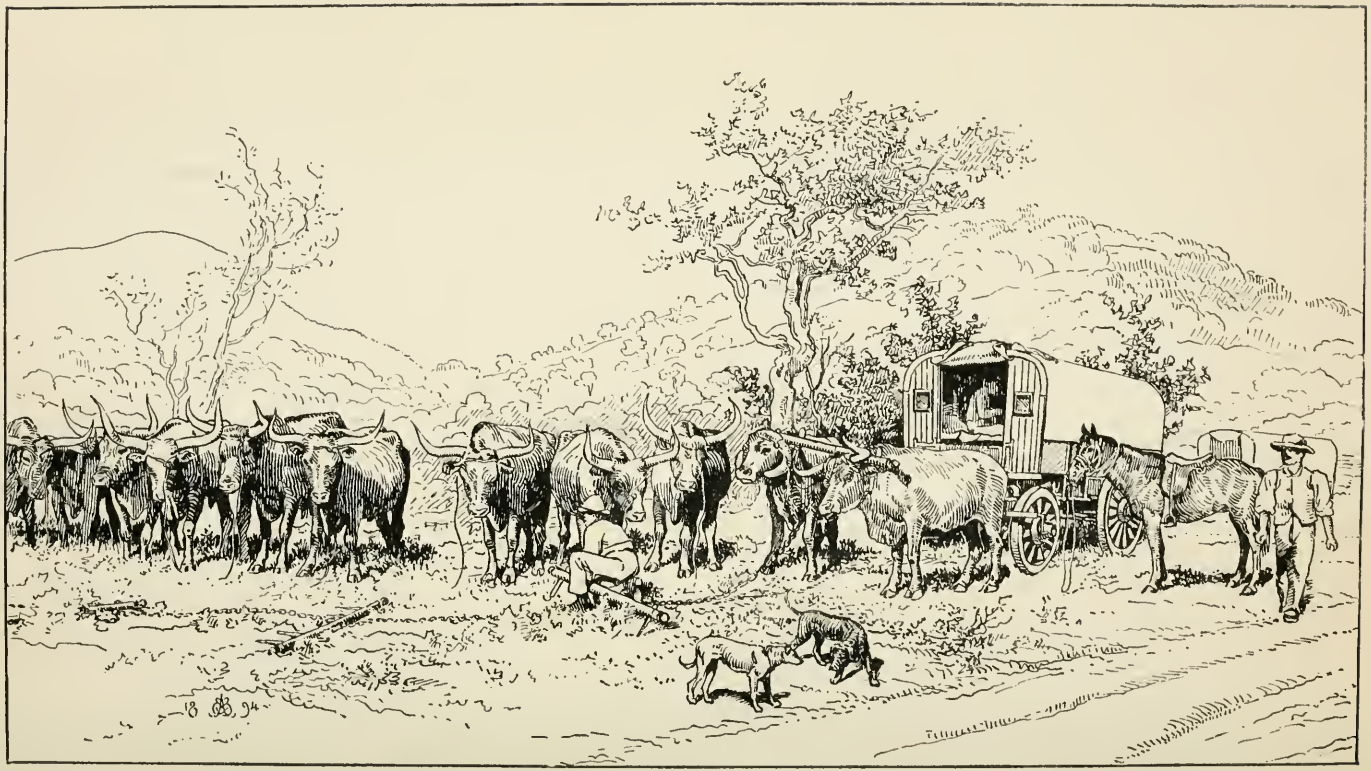
# TWELVE HUNDRED MILES IN A WAGGON



INSPANNING.

# TWELVE HUNDRED MILES IN A WAGGON

BY

ALICE BLANCHE BALFOUR

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR

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TO MY

Fellow-Travellers

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# INTRODUCTORY NOTE

In the spring of last year our party of four started for the Cape, intending to travel through Matabililand and Mashunaland by waggon. We were in happy uncertainty as to how this was to be accomplished, but as regarded both the route to be pursued and the mode of conveyance to be employed, two things only were certain—that no two people gave the same advice, and that each person was convinced that his plan was the only one that was practically possible. Finally, our arrangements were made in accordance with the advice of Mr. G. Grey, who had lived for some time in the Chartered Company's territory, and who made the fifth member of our party during the whole of our "trekking" expedition. I may add that we never had any

reason to regret having put ourselves in his hands.

As two of our waggons had to be built specially for our needs, it was some weeks before we were able to start. These were spent at the Cape and in visiting the Orange Free State, Basutoland, Johannesburg, and Kimberley; and we finally joined our waggons on the 30th May near Mafeking.

The following extracts are compiled from my letters and journal. They were written with no thought of publication, and do not pretend even to give a full account of our travels, much less an account of the country. I have thought it advisable to leave out almost all reference to the various political and social problems which naturally presented themselves in the different countries which we visited, as well as descriptions of towns, mines, and other subjects which have either been described before, or would require much more knowledge than can be hastily acquired by a passing visitor like myself, to do justice to. Nearly everything personal has, of course, been

omitted, and that being so, I take this opportunity of saying, once for all, that we were everywhere received with a kindness it is impossible to exaggerate. Every one we met seemed to think no trouble too great and no inconvenience worth considering which could minister to our comfort; and we shall always retain the most grateful remembrance of the wonderful hospitality of South Africa.

ALICE BLANCHE BALFOUR.

WHITTINGEHAME,
*December* 1895.

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# LETTER I

Start for the Cape—The Captain's merman—A passenger in a butter cask —Madeira—Teneriffe—"Portuguese men-of-war"—Flying fish—The murder of Carey—Saldanha Bay—Table Bay.

ON BOARD THE S.S. *ROSLIN CASTLE*,
*30th March* 1894.

WE started from Southampton on 24th March, our party consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Albert Grey, Mr. H. Fitzwilliam, and myself. It was a lovely evening, the setting sun shedding an exquisite light over the "Needles." Till we passed the island of Ushant the vessel remained steady, but there she began to roll (her nick-name—fully deserved—is the "*Rolling Castle*"), and has never stopped since except during the few hours we were at Madeira, and for about an hour as we passed among "the Islands," as the ship's officers always designate the Canaries. On Saturday evening I dined in the saloon (I

haven't had a meal in it since), and made acquaintance with our commander, a good-humoured Scotchman, who tells capital stories, and isn't the least ashamed of his early life as a sailor before the mast. He told us of his one experience of seeing, what he jokingly calls, a *Merman*. It was off Cape Blanco (just where we are passing now, 4 P.M. 30th), some ten years ago. He was on the bridge, and looking down saw a creature in the water of a sort of nondescript gray-brown colour, with long fore and hind limbs, but, as far as he could see, with no tail. It seemed about 15 or 20 feet long. The creature used its forelimbs to swim exactly like a man does, and he could see a kind of scalloped-edged web extending from the wrists to the body. The head appeared to be flattish; but he only saw it for a short time, and was too far above it to make out more about it. He never saw a beast like it.

Another of his stories was of when he was a sailor before the mast in a sailing vessel, where, as the voyage was longer than usual,

great care had to be taken to waste no food. He was sent down to where the provisions were stored to collect a lot of potatoes which had got loose, and put them into a sack. A passenger, a young man who had taken a liking to him, went down with him to help him. Our captain asked this passenger to hold up the sack when he had got some of the potatoes in it, and to shake them to the bottom. The man was too short to do this easily, and in order to manage better, got on to a cask. As he heaved the sack with a mighty jerk, the top of the cask on which he was standing gave way. It was in the Tropics and very hot, and the cask was full of butter in a half-melted condition. In went the passenger bodily, and out spurted the butter in a fountain all round. A great lump hit our captain in the eye, and when he had cleared it away he saw the unfortunate passenger standing in the cask, completely enveloped in butter, and so firmly stuck that it was some time before he could be got out again.

We got to Madeira at about twelve on the

28th, and very lovely the island looked. We were immediately surrounded by the usual boat-loads of chattering Portuguese, trying to sell all sorts of wicker chairs and baskets, parrots, fruit, embroidery, etc., and other boats with men naked to the waist, diving for money thrown into the water by the passengers. In one boat was a tiny boy who was made to dive : the poor little wretch looking so miserable, with his forehead and cheeks puckered to his eyes, and shivering and shaking with cold. We landed in one of the boats, and in the afternoon went up to the Mount Church, Mrs. Grey and I in hammocks and the men on horseback ; they (the men) being much amused at the way the owners of the ponies held on by their tails up the hill. The Bougainvilleas, geraniums, daturas, and all sorts of flowers looked supremely lovely, and after the miseries of the voyage how one longed to remain, instead of going on in that vile steamer shining white in the smooth bay below. The oak-trees were just in full leaf, the planes and vines coming out. Robins were singing in the evergreen oaks,

picturesque-looking wrinkled old women looked down at us from the terraced walls, and the barefooted children ran alongside carrying baskets balanced on poles over their shoulders.

The Mount Church is nearly 2000 feet above the sea, and the correct thing to do is to come down most of the way back in a basket sledge. The road, which is paved with cobbles worn smooth by many generations of sledgers, is so steep that the sledges go down at a tremendous pace, even with two men holding on with ropes as drags; and Mrs. Grey and I, being a light load, did it in style. Whenever the slope lessens, one or other of the men runs forward to place a greased cloth under the smoking runners to prevent them heating too much. It was pleasant to renew the old experiences and see the old sights with which I had once been so familiar; but it was a sadly discordant note to observe a wheeled vehicle intruding among the bullock sledges of my youth.

Yesterday morning we came in sight of Teneriffe. The peak was visible for some hours, though surrounded by cloud banks; and glorious

it looked standing snowclad against the blue sky, and below purple and pink to the water's edge. But I was disappointed to find that the mountain rises far less abruptly from the sea than I had expected. The outlines of the island on our right were much more beautiful, and a shower on the hill-tops added wonderful lights and shades. This afternoon we have been passing Cape Blanco — a long white sandbank looking like a low chalk cliff. Several schooners were seen afar off fishing on the bank near which we were passing. The temperature is perfect, and to-day for the first time since we started (except the few hours at Madeira) have I felt that life is not wholly unadulterated misery.

*3rd April.*—We cross the Equator to-day. The last two days and nights have been oppressively hot—not so much that the temperature was very high (I don't think it has been above 80°)—but because the air is so muggy and damp. Drops of moisture coagulate in rust at the points of my scissors and knives. Everything is sticky, and the smuts from the funnels adhere to every-

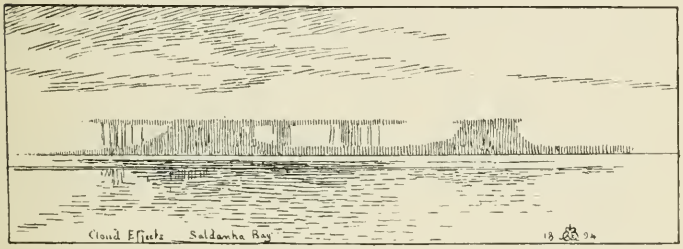
thing. Yesterday morning thousands of "Portuguese men-of-war"[1] — so called because they topple over on the smallest provocation—floated by. Their colours are perfectly exquisite—delicate yet brilliant pinks, violets, and oranges gradating into one another. There are a good many flying fishes about, and of course, like every one else, I tried to make up my mind whether they really fly, or only jump with the fins acting as parachutes. They skim along for great distances,—far greater, it seems to me, than could be done by a mere spring into the air,—and keep very much at the same pace and at the same level above the water, their fins vibrating rapidly all the time. Occasionally they just touch the water and go on again, but whether they receive fresh impetus by so doing I can't make out. I have not been able to see whether they can turn in the air, but they do go in curves, blown, I think, by the wind. One jumped in at a porthole window one night, attracted by the light.

[1] *Physalis pelagicus*, an animal belonging to the same class as jelly fishes.

The first officer has been telling me how he arrested O'Donnell on board the *Melrose Castle* when he murdered Carey, the informer of the Phœnix Park murders. He (the first officer) was on the bridge when he heard a shot. He rushed down, hearing two more shots as he ran, and just as he got to the passengers' quarters, saw Carey run along into the arms of his wife, who came out of her cabin with a child in her arms, and they all fell in a heap together. The steward was too much startled to do anything, so the first officer rushed forward and seized O'Donnell. He was afterwards several times advised to go away and not give evidence, for fear of danger to himself from the Fenians.

11*th April*.—This afternoon we arrived at Cape Town. We could see Table Mountain fully fifty miles away. On our left was the low coast of Saldanha Bay, with extraordinary horizontal and perpendicular bars of cloud, indistinguishable in colour from the hills on which they rested, and looking like Titanic tables with innumerable legs. Nearer the Cape there was a great deal of

mirage, so that land appeared where no land was, and foreshortened ships looked like tall factory chimneys. It was brilliant sunshine, and as we approached the harbour the great group of hills—Table Mountain, Devil's Peak, and the Twelve




CLOUD EFFECTS, SALDANHA BAY.

Apostles — looked splendid in pink and blue. Robben Island beside us, a low, flat sandbank, dull green above and sandy gray beneath, looked inexpressibly dreary by contrast; and one felt doubly for the lepers living there in monotonous misery.

## LETTER II

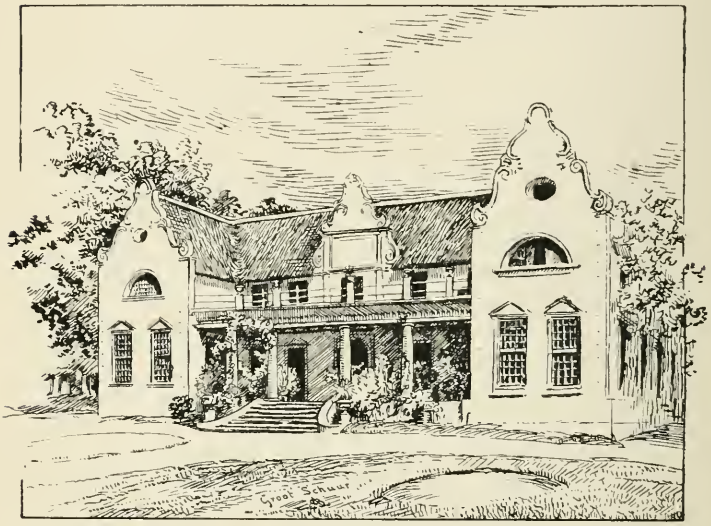
Cape Town—Groot Schuur—Klip-springers and spring-bucks—Orange scale and ladybirds—Fish-carts.

GROOT SCHUUR, RONDEBOSCH,
CAPE TOWN, 17*th April* 1894.

WE expected to have to go to a hotel on landing, and were therefore agreeably surprised when we were met at the quay with the information that Mr. Rhodes had placed his house at Rondebosch at our disposal—Mr. Rhodes himself being in Pondoland. The quay presented a wonderful mixture of nationalities: Malays in turban or fez; Negroes and Kaffirs of all shades from yellow to black, and equally variable hairiness of face; whites, pure and mixed; and some people looking like Indians, notably Mr. Rhodes' coachman, an orange-coloured individual with glossy black hair and luxuriant whiskers, correctly dressed in plain livery, and driving a typical pair

of Cape grays in a Cape cart. This is a most fascinating kind of vehicle on two wheels, holding four persons, all facing the horses, the whole being covered with one large hood. In this Mrs. Grey and I were driven to Mr. Rhodes' house, Groot Schuur, which is a few miles from the harbour, along a flat road, at first running through the outskirts of the town, with low, irregular houses scattered on either side, mostly roofed with corrugated iron, and surrounded with the usual dreary wastes of rubbish heaps and excavations for new houses, which seem to be the almost invariable accompaniments of a town which is what is called "thriving." Presently you come to rows of barrels set up at intervals, and without any tops to them. These are at first puzzling to the newcomer; but careful inspection shows that a tiny eucalyptus is concealed in each of them for protection against the cutting winds. Another thing that strikes one as odd at first is the habitual use of old biscuit-tins for flower-pots, which does not add to the beauty of a garden. Further from the town are rows of larger eucalyptus, stone pines,

and oaks, and hedges of huge aloes. But all these are spoiled by the thick rust-red dust from the road. Everything for ten or twenty yards on either side becomes rust-coloured—the grass, the aloes, the stems and twigs of the trees, and even



GROOT SCHUUR.

every needle on the pines; and one's towel is equally tinged when one washes one's face after going along the road.

Groot Schuur is an old Dutch house which had been anglicised, and which Mr. Rhodes is now restoring to the original Dutch type once more,

by adding high rococo gables ornamented with white plaster-work. The oak-trees all round are still quite green, although it is early winter, and the garden is full of lovely tea roses and other flowers.

We drove three or four days ago to call on Mr. and Mrs. Rudd. They have a most lovely view over the Hottentots Holland mountains, which looked brilliant in the setting sun. Mr. Rudd keeps a few tame African antelopes. One of them, a poor little Klip-springer (Klip = Rock), looked so melancholy in the thick grass of its field, where its hoofs grow too long for want of exercise on the cliffs. They once took it to the front door, when it immediately began dancing up and down the steps with joy. It is about as large as a good-sized lamb, and about the colour of a hedgehog. The spring-bucks, of which Mr. Rudd has several, are very pretty indeed. When they are excited they career over the field in true "buck-jumping" style, springing high into the air on all four legs at once, the legs held perfectly straight

and stiff, the head down, the back arched, and body contracted behind the ribs, so that they look just like the badge of the Order of the "Golden Fleece." While jumping or running a great ruff of long white hair suddenly starts up like magic on the croup round the tail, disappearing again as soon as they are quiet. Mr. Rudd also showed us the scale which infests orange-trees, and is so fatal to their growth. When this ravaged the Colony a short time ago, he sent to California for the lady-bird, which destroys the scale. A large number were sent, but most died on the way. Those that lived were carefully nursed, and soon increased rapidly, and almost exterminated the scale over the country. They then died out themselves—having nothing left to feed on—and when, some time after, the scale reappeared, Mr. Rudd had the greatest difficulty in getting any ladybirds in the district. The ladybird is very small—smaller than most of our ordinary English ones; and coloured black with red spots.

There is as great a variety in the vehicles

you see in Cape Town as in the nationalities. Waggons drawn by "spans" of twelve or fourteen oxen, or half a dozen mules, are frequent. The horses are small and light, and it is far more common to see two horses in a cart than one. It rather surprises one at first to meet a cart full of empty bottles or other rubbish driven four in hand; or to see what we should call a cadger's cart, in which fish is being hawked along the streets, drawn by two fiery steeds, with the invariable accompaniment of a horn like an English stage-coach. The number of these fish-carts is extraordinary. You hear them passing all day. Once I remarked to some one that there must be an immense amount of fish being caught just now, and was immediately informed that fish was then unusually scarce!

## LETTER III

Scenery near Cape Town—Table Mountain—Aerial tramway—Stellenbosch —Slave graves—Cape cart — Frenchoek — Leopards and baboons— Wages of natives—Bushman folklore—A fight with Bushmen—Snake bites—Seismic disturbances—Arrangements for waggon journey.

GROOT SCHUUR, 1*st May* 1894.

SINCE I last wrote we have made several expeditions in the neighbourhood. The scenery wherever we have been is wonderfully fine. I cannot imagine why one has never heard of the beauties of this country. You have the sea, with a very varying coast line; magnificent ranges of serrated hills, glorious in colour, often running out into promontories; and long stretches of flat land covered with all sorts of vegetation and exquisite flowers, from which the hills rise often quite abruptly. My idea before I came here was that the district, otherwise uninteresting, was made remarkable though not beautiful

by one flat-topped hill. In reality Table Mountain is but an unusual incident amongst a wealth of splendid points and jagged edges. How I should like to spend months here trying to paint their beauties!

On the 18th we rode up Table Mountain. It is a bad time of year for flowers, yet every step brought lovely new ones into sight. When we got to the upper part of the hill the ground, instead of being sandy as it is below, was peaty, and the streamlet beside us was amber-coloured like a Highland burn. The general colour was also similar to the higher parts of a Scotch hill; it was only when you looked close that you saw that the heaths, rushes etc., are quite different from our own, and have no grass growing between the tufts.

At the Wynberg reservoir we were met by Mr. Stewart, the engineer of the new Cape Town reservoir, about half a mile further on. Under his guidance we were shown the new reservoir, which is simply a natural basin fed by the surface drainage of the top of the

mountain, and closed at the narrow rocky gorge which forms its only outlet, by a strong masonry dam.

Instead of riding back by the way we had come we went down in an aerial tram used for bringing up cement, which starts from a cleft between two of the "Twelve Apostles," a group of peaks forming one side of Table Mountain. The tram consists of a cage hung on a wire-rope passing over high iron standards, and is worked by a steam engine at the bottom of the mountain. The cage hangs below and on one side of the rope, being supported on a framework above connecting two wheels with deeply grooved tyres, which run tandem-wise on the rope. On the lower and less steep part of the mountain-side the standards are not very far apart; but on the precipitous upper part the spans between them are as much as 1400 and 1500 feet, and the descent is the steepest of any aerial tram in the world. Although it is so steep, the hill is so nearly perpendicular that in one place, as you look

down out of the cage, the ground below you is 200 feet off. The vertical descent amounts to 2200 feet. It takes ten minutes at ordinary speed to go from one end to the other; but in consideration of our nerves we were taken much more slowly, and even so, as the wheels passed over each standard there was a jolt. The engineer told us that once when he was going along fast, the jolt was so great that one of the wheels went right up off the rope. Had it not luckily come down again on the rope the cage would have fallen. Mr. Grey decided (*after* we had come down) that it was not a safe method of progression; but the engineer would not hear of this, saying that it was far safer than a railway train, for if you had an accident in *that* you might be mutilated, whereas in *this*, speedy and sudden death were your inevitable portion.

Perhaps the pleasantest expedition we have made was to Stellenbosch and Frenchoek. We started at 7.30 in the morning by train for the former, and were met there by Mr. Merriman,

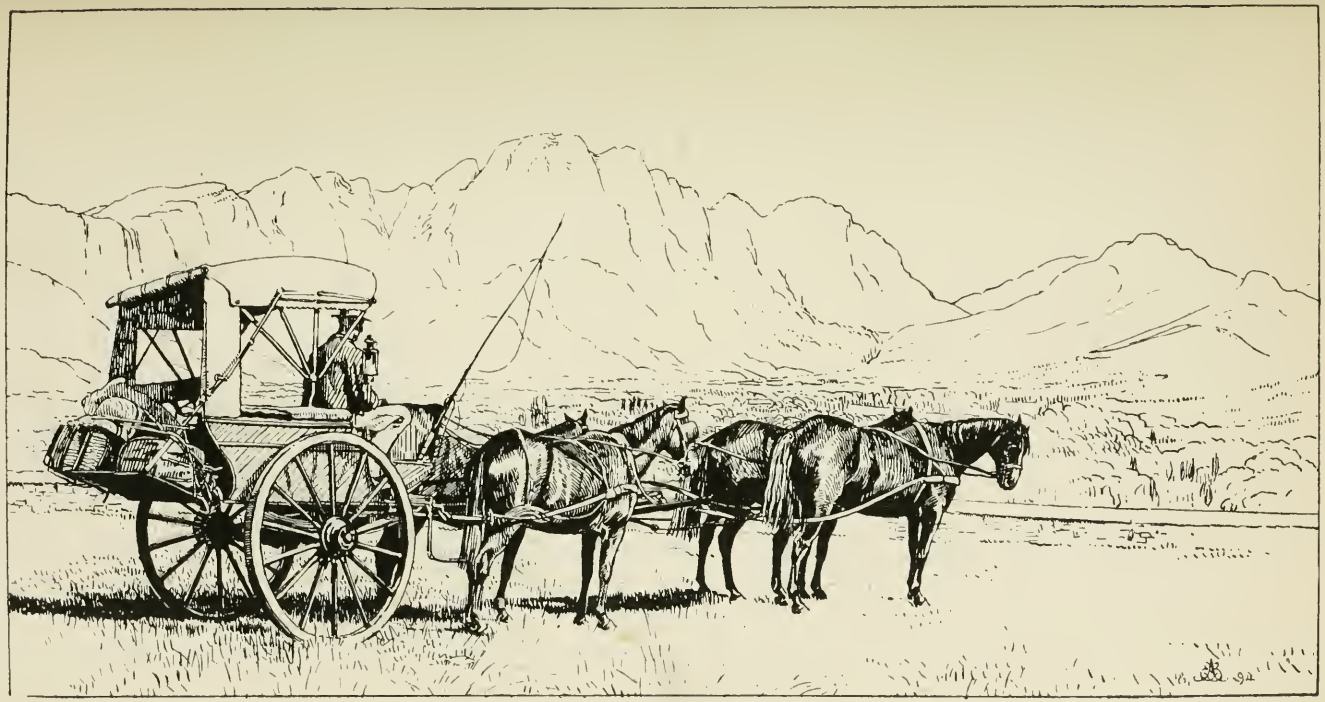
an ex-minister of the Colony, at whose farm we were to lunch. On the way we went to see the village, which is very picturesque, with its attractive old Dutch buildings. Every street has avenues of oak and eucalyptus along it, and streams of running water on either side. Many of the oaks are nearly two hundred years old, the trees having been introduced by the early Dutch settlers. The old houses have quaint rococo gables, and roofs thatched with rushes which have a strong aromatic smell. Alas! new thatched roofs are no longer permitted in the villages for fear of fire, and iron roofing is being everywhere substituted. When a Dutchman puts on a new iron roof (which he does with conscious pride), he usually also takes away the pretty ornamented gables, so that all the houses are gradually being reduced to the commonplace nineteenth-century type.

I never saw anything like the size and number of the acorns the oak-trees produce in this country. They cover the ground so thickly that to walk over them is like walking on coarse gravel.

The acorns are collected by the coloured women and children, and are kept to feed stock on. After leaving Stellenbosch we drove through the plain to Mr. Merriman's farm, a nice old Dutch house surrounded by oak-trees; and mixed casually among these were a number of oval, slightly raised patches, surrounded by stones and looking like large unused flower-beds. Mrs. Merriman told me these were the graves of the slaves belonging to the original Dutch proprietors. It was melancholy to see these neglected looking spots, without a sign as to what lay beneath. The poor creatures were only considered sufficiently above the beasts to be buried—the how and the where were matters of no moment.

After lunch we all got into a Cape cart with three seats painfully close together (the chinks being filled with our luggage) and drawn by four horses. With the driver and his black boy, we were seven altogether. This seemed to me rather a feat, but I afterwards saw a Cape cart with nine Malays in it, three on each seat, beside which our performance sank into insignificance.

The low pass which we first crossed on our way to Frenchoek (so called after the French Huguenots who settled here on the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes) was covered with large heaths six or eight feet high, and sugar bushes (Proteas) covered with their splendid large flowers, in shape somewhat like the great cactus flowers of our greenhouses, but delicate pink in colour, sometimes with each overlapping petal tipped as with black velvet. The celebrated silver trees were growing in patches here and there. They are far more silvery than any tree I have ever seen. The rest of the drive to Frenchoek was most lovely, along flat plains shut in on either side by splendid serrated hill ranges. We slept at an old Dutch farm-house belonging to a Mr. Kril, which he has made a boarding-house. At half-past six we sat down to "high tea," Mr. and Mrs. Kril presiding at the ends of the table, we sitting at either side, and the driver of our Cape cart being also one of the party. The Krils were most attractive people, ready to tell one everything they could about the country. Mr. Kril



CAPE CART, FRENCHOEK.

said that there were still tigers (by which he meant leopards) to be found among the surrounding hills, which sometimes come down at night to prey on the sheep or poultry, when the whole of the neighbouring inhabitants pursue them with dogs, chasing them from tree to tree till they are driven into an isolated one from which there is no retreat. Then they light a fire under it, and the glare of the flames gives light enough to shoot the hunted animal. Baboons are also a nuisance. They come down to get the ripening fruit from the orchards. Only a week before this a pack of them came down from the rocks to the orchard of a neighbouring shepherd. He had had children watching the orchard every day for weeks, but they had happened to be absent on this one day, whereupon the baboons took the opportunity and came down in force. Luckily the shepherd saw them from afar and hurried back with his dogs. The baboons took refuge in the trees, and he left the dogs to keep guard over them while he went to fetch some neighbours with guns, when they killed seven of them.

We were told by Mr. Kril and some others the wages they paid their coloured labourers, and as all paid about the same, I should think it was a common rate among the better class of employers. The men on the farms get one shilling a day including Sunday, dried fish morning and evening, meat in the middle of the day, bread at each meal, and wine five times a day. If you wish to keep your labourers in a fairly permanent way, you must also give them a house; but there are great complaints of the difficulty of getting them to stay any length of time.

I have just been reading some stories collected from Bushmen. None of them are good as stories, but they are interesting from the strong points of resemblance in them to European folk-lore. For instance, incidents such as that of the girl and boy who fly from a witch or ogre and place obstacles (*e.g.* a stick which straightway becomes a forest) in the way of the pursuer, are here constantly reproduced, the pursuer being invariably a cannibal, either male or female. Mr. Orpen, who lent me these stories, some of which

he had collected himself, was once seriously injured by Bushmen. As a magistrate he had gone to an encampment of them, to persuade them to remove from the land of a Dutch farmer on which they had squatted. The force he had with him, though kept by him at a distance, alarmed them, and they gathered themselves together in one of their huts, prepared to resist his entrance. After some search he found them, when they immediately let fly. One wounded him with an assegai, another wounded a Boer who was with him with a poisoned arrow, and his life was only saved by Mr. Orpen making him lie down and at once cutting out the flesh round the wound with a knife. There followed a general melée, in which another Boer was wounded in the wrist with a poisoned arrow, of which he died. Long afterwards, Mr. Orpen met these Bushmen again, and found out the cause of their resistance. They had believed that it was intended to collect them together and shoot them down wholesale.

Mr. Orpen also talked to me about the poisonous snakes of the country. One species ejects the

poison from its teeth to a distance of several feet in small jets. If the poison touches skin which is whole, it only acts as an irritant, but it is sufficiently powerful to cause blindness if it gets into the eyes. He, like every one else, looks upon danger from snakes as but a remote possibility. But also, like every one else, he proceeded to tell me of a case of a fatal snake bite occurring within his own experience. His son was riding a valuable horse through some long grass, when the animal suddenly swerved, and, after going on for a few more minutes, began to shiver violently. His rider got off, and on examination found the marks of the poison fangs of a snake on the body just below the saddle. The horse was shot to save it from a more painful death.

We hope to go to the Observatory this evening. There is a pool of mercury there for observing the reflections of the stars. The other day I heard that on the night of the earthquake in Greece which destroyed Thebes a few days ago, no observations could be made on the mercury owing to the seismic disturbances.

This is our last day at Cape Town. We have stayed here longer than we intended, as there has been considerable difficulty in making the necessary arrangements for our waggon journey up country. At one time it had been settled that we should go in small light waggons drawn by mules, as these go faster than oxen, but when Mr. George Grey (Mr. Albert Grey's cousin) joined us from Mashunaland, it was decided to have ox waggons instead. This avoids the difficulty of carrying food for the mules. Oxen feed on the dried grass of the veldt as they go along. Besides that, ox waggons will be much more comfortable and roomy than mule waggons. Two are now being built for us at the Paarl, and as soon as they are ready and have gone to Vryburg by rail, we shall meet them near there. Meanwhile we are going to make a short tour in Basutoland and elsewhere, starting early to-morrow.

## LETTER IV

Leave Cape Town—Worcester—Ostrich farm—Cape railways—The Karroo—Karroo Hills—The first meercat—Orange Free State—Native huts—Opening of the Folksraad—Locusts

BLOEMFONTEIN, ORANGE FREE STATE,
*7th May* 1894.

WE left Cape Town on the morning of the 2nd by a slow train (the express runs by night) in order to see the country, as the train winds up among the hills to the Karroo plateau, some 3000 feet above the sea. And certainly it was very well worth seeing, and I am more than ever impressed by the stupidity of mankind elsewhere in not having long since appreciated its beauty. We slept two nights at the little town of Worcester. From there we drove one morning, starting before sunrise, to see an ostrich farm. The owner, Mr. Rabie, keeps about a hundred adult cocks and about sixty hens and young birds. It was

most amusing to watch the former when they came up to be fed. They made great pretence of bravery, pairs of them advancing at each other with wings flapping excitedly, first one wing and then the other alternately, their great muscular legs raised to strike in the most pugnacious manner; but just as you thought a deadly battle was inevitable, one of the pair always suddenly dropped his wings, turned tail, and walked off calmly, as though the idea of fighting had never entered his mind. I have seen many pictures of ostriches, but they never conveyed to me the impression of the disproportionately small head and thin neck, and the even more disproportionately huge legs. The "drumstick" part of the leg is as bare of feathers as that of a plucked fowl, and stands out boldly against the soft black feathers of the body in almost indecent-looking nakedness. It is a bad moment to see the birds on this farm, as their white wing and tail plumes have lately been all cut off for sale. This is done about every nine or ten months. The stumps of the quills are easily pulled out with-

out hurting the birds when they have dried up, about three months after the feathers have been cut; but the feathers would get injured if they were left on till the quills were dry. Near the house was a brood of young ostriches about six weeks old, but already much bigger than turkeys, and covered with brown down; and close by was an enclosure in which were a cock and two hen ostriches put there to breed. Unless both hens lay at the same time, the one who has no eggs will attempt to destroy the young of the other. If both hens lay simultaneously they put their eggs in the same place and both sit on them by day. The cock sits on them by night, his black plumage being then nearly invisible, instead of conspicuous as it would be by day.

We slept at Matjesfontein next night, having, in order to get as far, had to go in the guard's van of a goods train from Touws River (this is a name I can never spell right without much effort). Mrs. Grey sat on a raised part at the end of the van, looking, in the flickering light of an oil lamp, like the Sir Joshua picture of Mrs.

Siddons, dignifying all her surroundings; but I am afraid neither Mr. Fitzwilliam nor myself acted up to the part at all, as we sat nodding down below. Next day we travelled through the "Karroo." We were now in the express train—average pace about nineteen miles an hour, an improvement of about four miles an hour on the slow train. Comfortable as railway travelling is here, speed is not its strong point, and the humorous side of this is fully appreciated by the inhabitants of the Colony. It is said that an express train and a bullock waggon once agreed to have a race, when the former, in its extreme anxiety to win, ran off the line. Here is another story that we were told. A train once stopped for a long time where there was no station. At last a passenger put out his head and inquired the reason, and was told by the guard that a number of cattle were on the line. After a time the train went on, but in about twenty minutes stopped once more. Again the impatient passenger asked the cause, and received the same answer. "What! *more* cattle," said he. "Oh no, sir—same cattle!"

The Karroo plateau as we first saw it was really ugly: no distance visible anywhere; the earth of a dirty brown colour, sparsely dotted with dull green and gray scrub; low hillocks on either side, spotted with big rusty-black stones, and here and there with ridges of rock cropping out along their tops, looking exactly like low dry-stone dykes. Later on, the plain became flatter, and distant views began to appear. These always redeemed the colour of the landscape by their beautiful pinks and blues. Sometimes we passed a herd of Angora goats, or a flock of mixed goats and sheep, always watched by an attendant Hottentot. More rarely we crossed a dry water-course marked by a few thorny bushes—the only approach to trees to be seen for miles. Cattle were visible occasionally, and their bleached skeletons bordered the line. I suppose they were mostly killed by the trains. We heard here that when the railway was made, the Cape Government promised to fence the line on either side, but hitherto this has not been done, which in the Orange Free State causes great dissatisfaction.

When cattle are killed by day the owners get compensation, but by night the owners are supposed to "kraal" them, and if they do not do so (and they are apt to be lazy about this in fine weather), and the animals are killed, they are paid nothing.

The typical Karroo hills are low and flat, as if their tops were sliced off with a knife, frequently looking exactly like artificial fortifications. Most of them seem to be capped with a horizontal layer of hard rock, and associated with these are conical hills, so regular in outline as to exactly resemble the sand heaped at the bottom of an hour glass. As these conical hills appear to be a little lower than the flat-topped ones, and are usually quite close to them, I suppose they were once part of them, and that the edges of the rock capping continually breaks away, and thus some outlying spurs of the hills gradually become separated into isolated masses. When the capping is entirely broken away a regular cone remains.

I am sure that no one can be more worthy of travelling through a new country than our

party. Everything we pass, down to the smallest flower, do we crane our necks to see; and the first "meerkat" (a little beast rather larger than a squirrel) we saw evoked such a shout that poor Mrs. Grey, who happened to be looking the other way at the moment, nearly jumped out of her skin. I wonder whether anybody from Cape Colony coming to England and seeing a rabbit for the first time was ever so much excited about it as we were about that meerkat?

After crossing the Orange River (just the colour of the Tiber) and entering the Orange Free State, the country becomes much more grassy, and the ant heaps dotted about it look just like the manure heaps on a stubblefield at home, while on every ant heap is perched a bird flirting its wings. There were a good many farms with a few trees, a dam (artificial reservoir), and a crudely green patch of barley as their invariable accompaniment, and as we neared Bloemfontein we passed several native villages. The huts in these are dome-shaped, and are covered with bits of tarpaulin and other materials, looking more like

low rounded haycocks spread over with dirty rags than anything else.

We have happened to come here just in time to see the annual opening of the Folksraad or Free State Parliament. One of the Judges was most kind in making all arrangements for us, and we were taken to the House in the President's own carriage. It is a fine block of new building, and as there are only about fifty-six Members, about half the space in the hall where the debates take place is given up to spectators, including women, who are not separated by a grating as if they were Mahomedans, as they are at home. Soon after we were seated President Rietz entered, dressed in black, as is the rule for all members of the Folksraad, and with a broad orange ribbon across his breast. The band, which comprises a large part of the standing army, then struck up the National Anthem, and after a long prayer from a clergyman present, the President began his opening speech. As it was in Dutch we naturally did not understand anything of it, until suddenly in the middle of it came the familiar

words "five shillings and sixpence." The Free State has no coinage of its own, and uses chiefly English coinage, but whether the speech had reference to this I don't know. The President again most kindly lent us his carriage in the afternoon, and after seeing the principal buildings and the Fort, guarded by a sentinel comfortably seated in the shade, we called on the President's sisters. We had some interesting talk about the recent flights of locusts, and Miss Rietz told us that many of the Boers refuse to take any steps to destroy the insects on the ground that, like the plagues of Egypt, they are the direct visitation of God.[1]

[1] I subjoin an extract which I read afterwards, from the *Standard and Diggers' News*, published at Johannesburg :—

BLOEMFONTEIN, 19*th May*.

The memorial against the destruction of locusts on account of religious scruples aroused considerable discussion. Several members contended that locusts were a plague sent by God, and He alone could remove them ; while others urged that it was the duty of the burghers to work together for the destruction of the plague and the safety of the crops. One member proposed that no further money be voted for the destruction of locusts, but whenever locusts or other plague arises, that the President consult with the Dutch Reformed Church Synod and other Protestant preachers, and appoint a day of humiliation and prayer. This caused a warm discussion, several members objecting to introducing questions of religious belief. Ultimately the resolution was carried by the casting vote of the Chairman ; but the Raad cannot accede to the petition, and authorises Government to assist in the destruction of locusts when appealed to.

I forgot to say that soon after we entered the Orange Free State, we passed through some swarms of locusts. We heard that a few days before that there were such enormous numbers along the line, and their squashed bodies made it so slippery, that the train was delayed about two hours. This indirectly led to the accident that happened at Touws River, when the late train dashed into another and killed the assistant engineer.

## LETTER V

Journey to Basutoland—The Presidential Coach—Birds—Thaba-n-chu—Drift on the Caledon River—Maseru native dress—Basuto Hills—Dongas — Absence of trees — Berea church — Berea donga — Roma Mission—Letloba's hut—Basuto decoration—Baskets—A Frenchman's easy path — Thaba Bosigo — Moshesh — Basuto riches — Purchase of wives—Division of labour—Taxes—Return to Bloemfontein.

JOHANNESBURG, 17*th May* 1894.

WE have just come back after a delightful week's expedition to Basutoland. We are gradually making acquaintance with all the different vehicles of the country; but the one we have just been in must, I think, be unique. We call it the Presidential Coach, as it is used by President Rietz when he travels about the country; and in token thereof it has a huge metal plate on the door, on which are painted the arms of the Orange Free State. It is drawn by six horses, managed by two black "boys." The "driver," who is the principal of

the two, rarely touches the reins, but on the other hand he uses the whip freely, and we left the town at a gallop, the little man with the reins being quite hoisted off his seat in his efforts to hold the six excited animals. Luckily on this flat veldt you may go pretty safely anywhere, unless you come to a *spruit* (stream) or a mudhole. When we did come to one of these, the "boy" who usually wielded the whip took the reins of the leaders, and the other "boy" held the wheelers (the two middle horses had no reins), and in this peculiar style we successfully crossed some very nasty places. We tried to get some information from these "boys" as to the birds we saw in passing, but the result, though occasionally amusing, was rarely instructive. Once we asked the names of three large birds which we saw sitting on an ant heap. The driver answered that he didn't know what the black one was, but the two white ones were black crows. Another time he assured us that a couple of birds (which I believe were storks) were wild turkeys.

There were a great many birds on these flat, grassy plains, the most remarkable being the famous "Secretary bird," who certainly would attract any one's attention as he stalks about with his long legs and half a dozen pens stuck behind his ear, from which he gets his name.

It took us two days' driving over the plains to get to Basutoland, and except at one or two farms (where the Boer had planted a poplar or a weeping willow near his "dam"), and along the banks of one river, I do not remember seeing a single tree the whole way. This river, which is very pretty, is called the Mud River, presumably by contraries, as it is the only stream we have passed of which the water is clear. We slept at a village about half way to the frontier, called Thaba-n-chu, a native name transferred from a neighbouring hill. If you can speak the language properly you put a click in between the *n* and the *c*, but this is beyond me. In this neighbourhood we passed through many swarms of locusts, the survivors of the thick clouds of them which but a few

weeks ago had come upon the country covered with luxuriant green vegetation, and had left it as we saw it, with nothing on it but short dead stalks.

Towards sunset on the second day we reached the Caledon River, which here forms the boundary between the Orange Free State and Basutoland. It runs in a very deep channel, with perpendicular sides, through which the road has been cut. The place for a drift (ford) is a matter for careful selection, as in most places the river beds are full of dangerous quicksands. The drift by which we crossed was about four feet deep; and until a few days ago it had been unfordable by wheeled vehicles for four months.

At Maseru, just beyond the river, we were received by the Acting British Resident, Mr. Lagden, and his wife, who with the invariable hospitality of South Africa had asked us to stay with them. As there is not so much as a pot-house in the whole country we should have been in a bad way but for their kindness. We felt it all the more as while we were with them

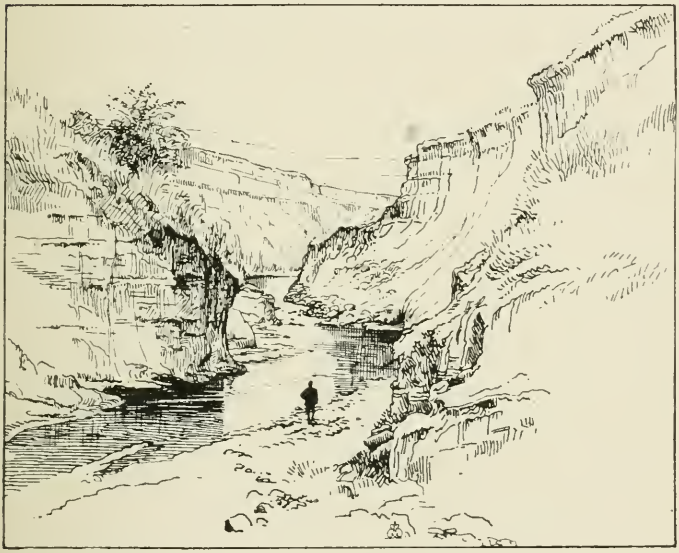
one of their children was very ill, and died just before we left.

The day after we arrived I went out sketching, greatly to the delight and amusement of the laughing and chattering natives, who crowded round me, of all ages and sizes, and in all degrees of costume, from the small children with nothing on at all, except perhaps a string of beads round the waist, to the grown-up men and women attired in a red blanket fastened under one arm and over the opposite shoulder, like a Roman toga. These blankets are the universal costume for grown-up people. They are bought at stores, and cost from fifteen shillings to thirty shillings. The fashionable colour here is crimson, on which is usually a loud pattern, such as hearts and diamonds a foot long. After lunch Mrs. Grey and I went with Mrs. Lagden to the French Protestant Mission Station, near the Berea Mountain. This hill is typical of most of those in this district of the country. They rise abruptly from the plain with very steep sides, and the tops, which are often several

square miles in extent, are quite flat, and consist of plateaux of hard rock about 50 to 100 feet thick, with perpendicular edges forming walls impossible to scale, except where they have got broken away irregularly at rare intervals. Great blocks of rock continually fall down to the bottom, but the typical shape of the hills remains until the whole of the rocky plateau has broken away. The rain pours over the edges of the plateaux in waterfalls, and washes out gullies in the soft earthy sides of the hills. Immediately on reaching the plains the streams thus formed begin to make *dongas*, or watercourses, through the soil, which is here often of prodigious thickness. These dongas rapidly increase in size and depth as they go along, their sides being almost perpendicular, only furrowed with rain, which sometimes leaves most fantastic pinnacles and spires of somewhat harder soil sticking up here and there. No doubt the formation of dongas, which intersect the plains in every direction, and which are so rapidly increasing in size and number, is greatly

aided by the absolute absence of trees. In the hollows of the hillsides, where the cattle cannot get at it, grows a good deal of small bush; elsewhere the country is absolutely bare of any natural wood whatsoever. Where any white men have settled, there immediately a few trees—chiefly *Eucalyptus globulus*—are planted, and the English Government tries to encourage the natives to plant trees, so that at almost every kraal you will find one or two. These are usually planted singly in the centre of deserted mud huts, by which they are protected from the cattle who would otherwise speedily destroy them. I asked the priests at the Roma station a day or two after, why more trees were not planted by the natives, considering the value of even the smallest timber. He said that the doves and pigeons, which are common enough as it is, congregate and multiply so enormously wherever there is any wood, that they almost destroy the neighbouring crops, and hence a natural dislike on the part of the natives to any afforesting.

On reaching the Berea Mission Station we went to see the church, a neat mud structure, the remarkable feature of which was its seats, which, owing to the impossibility of getting wood,



*From a Photograph.*

DONGA AT BEREA MISSION STATION, BASUTOLAND.

were also of mud, and ran out from the wall like benches. As they are given a fresh plastering of mud every year they have gradually grown wider and wider, and now the space between them is so narrow that there is scarcely room for the natives' feet. The missionaries are very

anxious to improve them away, but I thought them rather quaint and attractive, if uncomfortable. From this we were taken to see a donga close by. It differs in nowise from other dongas, except in being somewhat bigger than most. But the interesting point about it is that its commencement as a little ditch across which you could jump, was seen by a missionary who only lately left here; and the whole of its growth is the work of fifty years. It is now, we guessed, about 80 feet deep and about 150 feet wide.

Another day we drove to the Roman Catholic Mission Station called Roma, some twenty miles from Maseru. The Government spend much time and money in keeping the Basutoland roads in order, but no newcomer, unacquainted with the washing-out powers of the rain in this country, would guess it to look at them. The road got worse as we went on, the dongas getting deeper and more frequent as we got to more hilly country. At Roma we found a considerable plantation of blue gums, black wattle, and other Australian

trees, and a well-kept garden. The Mission is a French one, so it was a considerable shock to be welcomed by the priests at the door with a strong Irish brogue. True, the Superior was French, but he did not speak much English. We were treated as most honoured guests, presented with bouquets and addresses—the one to me containing flattering allusions to the Irish policy of the late Unionist Government. These were read by a Basuto boy in English with a strong French accent. Then followed little plays acted by the boys, arrayed in every variety of costume, from coloured paper caps to a gorgeous gold embroidered white coat of the date of the French Revolution. Then we went to the convent and saw the girls' schools. The nuns are teaching spinning and weaving, and they told us that girls who have learnt these arts are in great request as wives. The absence of clothes among the natives is what seemed to distress the good sisters most—more than the absence of Christian doctrines. The Fathers told us that they were now making no converts, and attributed their want of success in

this respect partly to the apathetic attitude of the neighbouring chiefs, but still more to the fact that no one could be admitted to the Church without abandoning polygamy. As wives are valuable property, the natives naturally dislike being limited to one, and having to repudiate the others.

Next day we rode over the hill beneath which the Mission is placed, visiting a chief called Letloba, who did us the honour of acting as our guide on the way. He had a nice, clean, round, red mud-built hut, with thatched roof, and with a *scherm* (sheltering fence) of reeds, about seven feet high in front, and forming a small courtyard at the entrance to the hut. The tall grass used for thatching and the reeds used for the scherms are some of the more valuable possessions of the natives, and there are more quarrels and trials in regard to the stealing of these than of anything else. The floor of the hut was clean red mud. Most huts have no furniture, but Letloba had a bed, chairs, and table. He himself was dressed in correct European costume to grace the occa-

sion, but his wives and families were in native costume. He presented me with a decorated clay pot, and then added a small one, which he called the "child" of the other. Mrs. Grey photographed him and his harem, with one of the wives in the attitude of grinding *mealies* (Indian corn). The mealies lie in a shallow depression in a large flat stone, and are ground by rubbing them with another stone. The wives and mothers all wore the universal red blanket, and the children wore scarcely anything but strings of beads. All their heads are more or less shaved. I saw no native here with hair more than one inch long, and it grows in little knots and rings dotted all over the head like bedded-out plants in a garden, with bare spaces between. The women are constantly tattooed on the face, the most favoured decoration being three lines starting close together from the front of the ear and spreading out, one to the eye, another half-way down the nose, and the third to the chin. Sometimes four dots are marked on the forehead, or a straight line down it. The colour of the skin is usually dark brown,

sometimes almost black, and when dusty appears to have a plum-like bloom on it, which I think beautiful; but I am sorry to say that the remarks I made to that effect were received with jeers by the rest of the party.

At another kraal (native village) which we passed on our way, some of the children had their heads smeared with red paint and oil, and I saw one or two men with the same. I believe this used to be a universal custom, which is now gradually dying out. We were shown here also how the Basutos make their baskets, which are sometimes so close in texture as to hold water. They are made of grass in concentric ropelike circles, which are sewn together by means of long needles flattened like sword blades. Some of the baskets made for holding mealies are quite enormous, several feet wide and high.

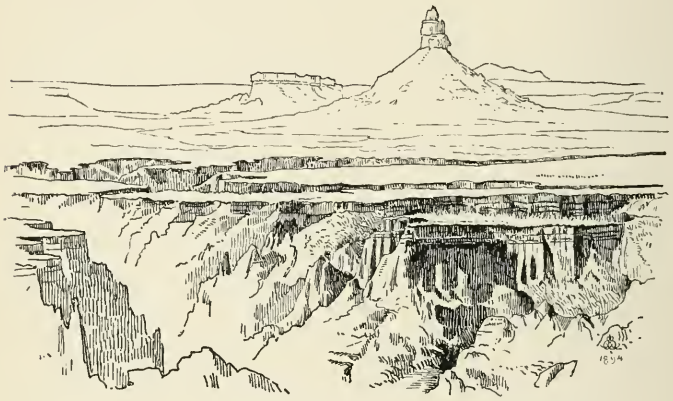
We came down the hill on the precipitous side above the Mission station. I had stayed behind the rest of the party to finish a sketch, and finding that they had all dismounted when the path became steep, I proposed doing so also. How-

ever the red-haired French lay-brother who was convoying me assured me it was quite easy to ride down, and that if I were not there he would go down *au galop*. (*N.B.*—He would certainly have broken his neck if he had.) Under these circumstances, I felt that the least I could do was to ride down at a foot's pace, and certainly I never rode over a worse path. In one particularly bad place he advised me—too late—to go round; and as my pony went down he looked anxiously to see the result. When I reached the bottom safely he exclaimed in a tone of ecstasy: "Ah! mais vous êtes Amazone!"

Our last expedition was to Thaba Bosigo, a hill celebrated for the successful defence of it by the Basuto chief Moshesh, against the Zulus.[1]

[1] "Moselekatse's [the Zulu chief] regiments had on one occasion attacked his stronghold: they rushed up its sides in great numbers, but an avalanche of stones, accompanied by a shower of assegais, sent them back with more rapidity than they had advanced. Their repulse was decisive, and the Zulus had to march away. At the moment of their departure a messenger came towards them, driving some fat oxen, with the word of the chief: 'Moshesh salutes you. Supposing that hunger has brought you into his country, he sends you these cattle, that you may eat them on the way home.' The Zulus were amazed. 'This man,' said they, 'after having rolled down rocks on our heads, sends us oxen for food. We will never attack him again.' And they kept their word."—Noble, *Handbook of the Cape and South Africa*, p. 415.

There are only five accessible places in the rock wall at the top, all easily defended; and on the flat plain above is plenty of pasture and good water. We clambered up through one of these gaps, and were well rewarded by a fine view of the Maluti Mountains, the highest peaks of which



HILL AND DONGA NEAR MOSUPHA'S KRAAL, BASUTOLAND.

reach to something like 10,000 feet; but these were not in sight. In the foreground was an extraordinary conical hill with a tall upright stone on the top. This stone is apparently the last remains of the usual flat plateau of rock, and no doubt it will soon break and fall down, and then the rest of the hill will be quickly washed away.

While I was sketching, the others went to see the graves of Moshesh and his family. They were oval heaps of stones, with the names very badly and irregularly painted on them, and in the case of Moshesh, cut very roughly in the stone. Coming down we went to the large kraal of Mosupha, a son of Moshesh, which is quite close to the conical hill before mentioned. He received us in state, dressed in ordinary coat and trousers, with a black cap like a railway porter's, decorated in front with a tuft of heron's feathers. He had mats spread out, and three or four chairs on which we were seated, and he then asked us a good many questions in English or through his interpreter. When he heard that we intended going to Matabililand, he ejaculated "Fools!" but whether the exclamation was intended to be in Sesuto or English we know not. His headmen lying and sitting all round us were a picturesque, rough-looking lot, quite the men who one would expect to attend on a man formerly famed for his ferocity. He is now about eighty years old, and his dark skin is drawn tight over his

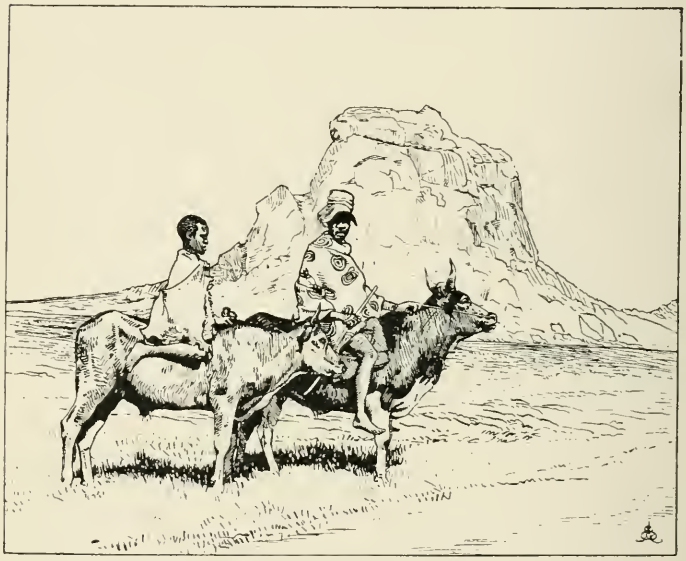
face like a mummy's. We asked permission to photograph his men, and he condescended to express a wish to be included, but not till his *knobkerrie* had been brought him. This he held up like a sceptre, and was as particular as any girl about being placed in an effective position. Before we went he made us look at his race horses, of which he is very proud. The Basutos are great horse racers, racing barebacked, as they assert that girths interfere with the animals' breathing. On the Queen's Birthday a race meeting is held at Maseru under the auspices of the English Resident, and for one or more of the races over a hundred enter, and all run their best, as it is considered as bad to be last as it is good to be first.

That part of Basutoland which we have seen seems to me to be very thickly populated—more so than any part of South Africa we have yet visited. You see more villages and pass more people as you go along than you would in many country districts at home. Many of the natives are extremely rich, that is as regards cattle, which

appear to be the possession they most covet. One is absolutely astonished at the number and size of the herds over the whole country ; and we were told that that is nothing like the number they really have, most of them being still on the higher hill ranges. They also have a great many ponies, some sheep and goats, and many compact and well-shaped pigs. The cattle and ponies seemed to be chiefly valued as possessions, as they are not much used, either for milking, eating, draught, or riding. No doubt the oxen have to do a certain amount of ploughing, as there is almost more cultivation than pasture on the low-lying lands. The Basutos do not like selling either cattle or ponies for money, unless at very high prices. The cattle are chiefly used for buying wives. A wife costs about twenty bullocks, ten sheep and a pony; and a chief's daughter double. A man's first wife is usually bought for him by his father. After that he must buy wives for himself. Each wife has to be housed in a separate hut.

The boys usually herd the cattle, and while

doing so we often saw them with their tiny bows and arrows prepared to shoot any unfortunate field-rat or mouse which might foolishly make its appearance. These creatures are regularly used



BASUTOS RIDING OXEN.

as food by the natives. The men do the ploughing, and the women all the rest of the work. You will every now and then meet a Basuto riding along the road on his pony or his ox, his wife trudging alongside, her baby on her back, and all their worldly goods in a great bundle on

her head. Some of these groups I tried to photograph, but the natives are in as much terror of a camera as of a gun,—perhaps they think it is one,—and make off at headlong speed the moment it appears.

The prosperity of the country is of course due to the supervision of a civilised government over the native chiefs. A hut tax of 10s. is paid annually, being collected by the police; and this is the only tax, direct or indirect, paid by the natives.

The two days' drive back to Bloemfontein were without particular incident; only whereas, in going to Basutoland, we had thought the road very bad, on our return journey we became aware that, on the contrary, it was remarkably good. Such difference in our views had the Basutoland dongas produced! By leaving Thaba-n-chu at about 5 A.M. we got to Bloemfontein in time to catch the train to Johannesburg, where we arrived early yesterday morning.

## LETTER VI

Johannesburg—Political situation in the Transvaal—Native dance—A mimic Witch-Doctor—Wooden pianos—Thunderstorm—Kimberley.

De Beers House, Kimberley,
28*th May* 1894.

I FELT depressed on leaving Basutoland to come to Johannesburg and here, as I expected to dislike both places very much; but, after all, I have found them both exceedingly interesting, and should have been sorry not to see them. At Johannesburg there are two absorbing topics of interest—gold mining and politics. We spent our days in going over some of the great works for treating the gold ore, when the difficulties which had one by one been overcome, and the keenness with which the scientific part of the work was pursued by the principal engineers and managers, almost roused me to enthusiasm. The three or four greatest experts are all Americans,

as is also the manager of the De Beers diamond mines here. More interesting even than gold-mining is the present state of politics in the Transvaal: the ever-smouldering irritation of the English at the inequality of treatment they suffer under the Boers being ready to burst into a blaze at the prospect of the commandeering for the war with the natives near Zoutpansberg. The inability of the Boers to see that they will have to accommodate themselves in the end to the much larger and intellectually superior population of Johannesburg, comes partly, I suppose, from the contempt in which they have held the English (and perhaps not without some apparent reason) ever since the war. But they do not realise in how many ways the situation has changed. Even they themselves have changed. For instance, thirty years ago the plains of the Transvaal were stocked with innumerable herds of antelopes, and the Dutchmen became expert marksmen in shooting them down. So effectually did they do this that the game is now practically extinct, and I am told

that the younger generation, having had no practice in rifle-shooting, are not much better shots than the average "Tommy Atkins."

Before we left Johannesburg we were taken to see a Kaffir dance in the Robinson Mine Compound. There were about two hundred natives, who divided themselves into groups according to tribes. They were dressed in every possible variety of costume, the minimum being three or four yards of bright-coloured cotton stuff ("limbo," as it is called here), wound round thighs and body, and the maximum being the whole contents of a ragshop. Some wore tufts of feathers or wool, or armlets and leg-bands made of a strip of ox-tail so fastened round that the hair stuck out like the spokes of a wheel. One man had a circular comb, like children wear at home to keep their hair back, stuck coquettishly upside down on one side of his woolly head, a pair of oxhorns hung round his neck, and his snuff-box (an old cartridge case) stuck through a slit in the lobe of his ear. No rag or bit of rubbish comes

amiss to these grown-up children, and the whole is mixed up with fragments of European costume of all kinds, from a German cuirassier helmet to an old stocking-leg. The dancing consisted chiefly of advances in lines or groups, each man lifting up one leg as high as possible at each step and then bringing it down with a bang, all in unison, accompanied by monotonous singing, both tunes (of only a few notes) and words perpetually repeated. At other times they would advance or retreat in mimic fight; or a man who had really killed some one (whether man, woman, or child mattered not) would advance by himself and go through the pantomime of creeping on his enemy, dodging his blows, or plunging his assegai into his heart. Such a pantomime, vividly executed, would draw a loud hum of approval from all his group. There was also the mimic Witch-Doctor, whose costume combined the contents of a ragshop with all the paraphernalia of his trade. He executed his wild dances with rolling of eyes, mouthings, charms, and contortions,

when suddenly a little fox-terrier, who had watched him suspiciously for some time, rushed forward and seized him by his coat-tail. The effect was magical. The Witch-Doctor promptly collapsed into the ordinary "boy"—an anticlimax which was hailed with universal derision. The dancing was accompanied by drums and three wooden Kaffir pianos. These last consist of two logs of wood wrapped in rags, laid parallel to each other on the ground in front of the player. Side by side across these are placed a number of slats of wood about fifteen inches long, which are actively hammered upon with a couple of drumsticks. The slats are slightly hollowed out underneath, and I presume that the variations in the hollows produce the variations in the sounds—I cannot call them notes.

Ever since we have been in South Africa we have been informed that the weather at any given moment was abnormal. It was abnormally hot at the Cape, then abnormally dry. It was abnormally hot at Johannesburg, then abnormally wet; and on our railway journey from Johannes-

KAFFIR DANCE, ROBINSON MINE, JOHANNESBURG.

burg here it was abnormally stormy. There was very heavy rain at times with thunder and lightning, and the cloud effects were magnificent. Unfortunately the rain has delayed our waggons, which have been going from Vryburg to Marizani, both by producing unexpected mudholes in the road, and also because the necks of the oxen are apt to get sore if they are made to work in wet weather. Consequently we have had to remain here longer than we intended, but we expect to start to-morrow.

Here we have spent our time in going down the Kimberley diamond mine, wonderfully arrayed in canvas jackets and sou'wester hats, and being shown all the different processes for securing the diamonds. Such disappointing things they are when you see them in the rough! The Kaffirs who work in the mines are kept in compounds during the whole time for which they engage to work in the mines, never being allowed to go outside, for fear of diamond stealing; and all sorts of precautions are taken to cut them off from any chance of communication with the

outside world. Inside the compound fence they are made very comfortable, with house and food arrangements which they would never have half so good in their own kraals. There are stores where they can buy all they want, and a hospital in case of illness. The De Beers Company have also capital houses, reading-rooms, etc., for their white employees, at some distance off.

This is the last civilised place we shall stop at for weeks, and in thirty-six hours we shall really begin to live an unconventional life in a country unspoilt by the hand of man.

## LETTER VII

Kimberley to Marizani—Straight line of railway—An American story—Our waggons and attendants—First afternoon's trek—Stuck in the mud—Jolts—Mafeking—Custom-House and vaccination difficulties—Visit to Willow Park—Rapid growth of Eucalyptus trees.

WILLOW PARK, ZEERUST, TRANSVAAL,
*3rd June* 1894.

WE have actually begun our waggon *trek*[1] at last, but though we started last Wednesday we have only had two nights in the waggons, so you see we are being broken in gradually. We left Kimberley on Tuesday last. That night at about ten we reached Vryburg, and there slept in the train, going on next morning in a little "special" along the as yet unopened line as far as the rails are laid, which is about ninety miles. The landscape was flat or slightly undulating the whole way, and dotted with scattered bush. In this country they will go round almost any curve

[1] *I.e.* to travel over the country.

rather than alter the gradients of the line or have to make either cutting or embankment; consequently even in flat districts the track usually keeps incessantly twisting about. It shows, therefore, how absolutely level is thirty-six miles of the country through which we passed, that the railway goes the whole of that distance in a straight line. I told you in one of my letters one or two stories about the pace of the Cape Colony trains. Mr. Gardner Williams, the American manager of the De Beers mines, capped these by telling us of a railway in the west of the United States where the trucks containing hay had to be covered in order to prevent the cattle eating it all up as the train went by! At Marizani Mr. G. Grey met us with the horses and *spider* (a kind of buggy), drawn by four mules, whence we drove for about six miles to where our waggons were outspanned. There are three of them. One is a second-hand buck-waggon[1] for the stores and heavy luggage; the other two are occupied, one by the three gentlemen and one by the two ladies.

[1] A transport waggon with a particular kind of rail at the sides.

Ours is supposed to be a model of all that is luxurious. It is about fourteen feet long, and about six feet wide above the wheels. It is covered with a canvas tent over its whole length, but the roof is not quite high enough to allow me to stand upright inside. It is divided by a curtain about half way along. At the front end are our beds, which lie parallel to the length of the waggon, and when down meet in the middle. They can be fastened up by day to the sides of the waggon if required. Under them are lockers, and our boxes fill up the floor in the middle. The waggon is lined with dark green cloth. The back end has small lockers along its sides with cushions on them to sit on. One gets out at the end by a high step, or when the oxen are out-spanned (unharnessed), by a ladder, as the floor of the waggon is over four feet from the ground. The gentlemen's waggon is of the same size as ours, but it has no central partition, and the beds lie across instead of along it. Both waggons are closed at the ends by curtains, which can be fastened firmly all round. The buck-waggon is

drawn by a span (team) of eighteen oxen, and the other two by fourteen and twelve respectively. The harness is of the most elementary kind, consisting of a trek-chain fastened to the end of the *diisselboom* (pole), and having yokes attached to it at intervals of about eight to ten feet. The yoke is like a thick curtain-pole, about five feet long. At each end of it (the trek-chain being fastened to the middle) is a pair of notched slips of wood called *skeis*, let into holes in the yokes at a sufficient distance apart for the neck of an ox to fit in between them. The yoke thus lies across the necks of the oxen, the skeis being perpendicular, and the whole pull being against the backbone just in front of the shoulders. The skeis and a bit of *reim* (strip of raw hide) fastened to one skei, brought round under the neck and hitched to the other, prevent the yokes from slipping off. There are no reins, except a little bit of reim fastened to the front pair of oxen, by which the "leader" or "boy," who walks in front in difficult places, pulls them in the required direction. All other guiding is done by shouts

and a liberal use of the whip in the hands of the "driver." The yokes seem to me to combine the greatest amount of discomfort to the oxen with the smallest amount of efficiency; but the fact that it is necessary to have the harness as far as possible made of materials and in a form that can be easily procured or repaired on the *veldt* (open country), by unskilled labour, is no doubt one reason why no efforts seem to have been made to improve it.

Our party consists, besides ourselves, of a conductor, called Dennison; a driver and leader to each waggon; a man to look after the horses; Hendrik, the little Hottentot driver of the spider, whose nostrils are wider from side to side than from top to bottom, giving him a most monkey-like appearance; Eley the cook, a first-rate man; and a good-looking youth called Soul, whose soul seems to have more resemblance to his colour than to his form. He is the cook's boy, but cannot be of much service, as he washes plates at the rate of about six an hour. His luggage consists of a tuft of ostrich feathers and a concertina

tied up in a blue handkerchief, on which he plays one dismal ditty of four notes repeated about a thousand times consecutively. All these, except, of course, the conductor, are "boys," *i.e.* coloured men.

On the day we started, our oxen were in-spanned (harnessed) about 6 P.M., and we all walked behind. It was quite dark, and after going a mile or two we blundered into so many mud-holes that I got into the waggon (Mrs. Grey having done so some time before). The men soon joined us there, and jolt, jolt, jolt we went along. How we shall ever learn to sleep when the waggons are moving I don't know. We got more and more bored with sitting on narrow high seats, jogging along in the dark at the rate of two and a half miles an hour. We had had nothing to eat since luncheon, and were not to be allowed anything till the oxen were outspanned at 10 P.M. Everything was higgledy-piggledy. We were very tired, and Mrs. Grey had a bad headache. Mr. G. Grey thought we had a great deal too much luggage, and that we were all very unreasonable

about things in general. Mr. A. Grey didn't wish us to trek as had been arranged by our conductor, for fear that it would tire his wife too much. Mr. G. Grey kept saying the oxen would get knocked up if the arrangements were altered. Altogether there was an air of depression about us. Suddenly, amid hoarse yells and shrieks, the waggons stopped. Out the men jumped to see what was wrong. The buck-waggon in front of us had stuck in the mud, and the leaders and drivers were screeching enough to skin their throats in their efforts to make the oxen pull it out. Their shouts were accompanied by violent crackings of whips, and the poor oxen got well beaten also. Mr. A. Grey presently came back *minus* his slippers. He had rashly ventured forward too near the buck-waggon, and was only saved from sticking in the mud, like it, by leaving them behind. We recovered them next day. They were the last fond present of his eldest daughter, and I am sure she would not have known them again. Presently the oxen from our waggon were taken to help the others, and about

ten o'clock, it being evident that we were fixed here for some time, we made efforts to get something to eat. Eley rose to the occasion, made a fire in the middle of the road, and managed to brew some tea and bake some scones ("cookies" they call them here). A couple of tins of potted meat were rescued out of the buck-waggon, and with the aid of our pocket-knives and good will we soon made a very hearty meal. The oxen were now so tired that it was arranged to give them a rest of two hours before again trying to get the waggon out. So we all went to bed, and had a good sleep till 4.30 A.M., when at last the mud-hole was crossed. Mrs. Grey and I had got to bed under difficulties, for our lamps went out before we were half undressed. From 4.30 to about eight we again jolted along, sometimes nearly thrown from one side to another, the cold frosty air getting down our necks, our pillows and mattresses slipping in every direction but the right one, and with generally a thorough feeling of dirt and discomfort. At about eight we happened to look out of the little window in front,

and saw we were coming to a small drift (ford) full of rocks, so we hastily lay down and held on with both hands till we were through it. Lucky for us that we did so. The men, who had not seen it, were thrown backwards and forwards all over the place. Just beyond this we outspanned. The men had a good bathe in the river, but we poor women had to do without water till we were dressed, and then our supply was of the scantiest, and my ablutions were performed standing out on the veldt. We have an excellent cook, and except for the scantiness of the meal on the first night, we have fed like fighting cocks. We have game of various kinds shot by the men, and we have a fine provision of tinned meats, jams, butter, etc. Preserved milk is the weakest point of our fare.

We got to Mafeking about luncheon-time, and settled to stay there for the day to arrange our luggage, and try and get rid of some superfluities. Thereupon the veldt was strewn with our goods in most admired confusion, and the afternoon was spent in sorting them, to the astonishment of all

beholders. Mr. Taylor, who has a large farm about thirty-six miles off, and who knew Mr. A. Grey in England, came over to see us at Mafeking, and invited us to stay with him for a day or two. The difficulty was how to get our luggage through the Custom House, as Mafeking is in British Bechuanaland and Willow Park is in the Transvaal. Mr. A. Grey telegraphed to Pretoria for facilities for our waggons, and next day we drove with Mr. Taylor to Malmani, where we were to receive the answer which was to decide whether the waggons were to follow or not. On our way through Mafeking the magistrate told us we might very likely be stopped on the frontier if we had no doctor's vaccination certificate. This was awkward, as of course we had none. The happy thought occurred to us of asking him to write one, which he did; and some miles further on when we saw the Boer policeman riding up to us across the veldt, we applauded our prudence. He demanded it, studied it with attention, and let us pass. We afterwards heard that he couldn't read. At Malmani Mr. A. Grey called on the

Custom House officer, who was all smiles and civility, which was not lessened by timely admiration of the baby; and our waggons were permitted to pass with the nominal duty of eighteen shillings.

We arrived at Willow Park that evening, and were most hospitably welcomed by Mrs. Taylor. It was very kind of her and Mr. Taylor to have us, especially just now, when their only trained servant had just departed without notice—a way these native women have. The quantity of the others did not make up for their lack of quality. The first morning I gave my brown leather boots to the black handmaiden to be cleaned, and they were just rescued by Mrs. Taylor as a great mass of blacking was about to be dabbed on to them. Mr. Taylor has gradually enlarged the house, and has made it very nice and comfortable. It is easy to add on to a house in this country, where the custom is for the bedrooms to open straight out of doors. If you want more rooms, all you have to do is to add them on casually anywhere, so long as they do not interfere with an already existing window.

Yesterday we were taken to a German mission station some miles from here, in the native location. There are about 2300 native huts together, nearly all circular, built of red mud of a harsh

*From a Photograph.*

MR. JANSEN STANDING AT THE FOOT OF TREES PLANTED BY HIMSELF.

rusty tone of colour, and often decorated with large patterns, such as triangles and stripes painted in white, black, and red. They have neat peaked thatched roofs, and a *scherm* (sheltering fence) of red mud in front, with a few fruit-trees round. The natives are Bechuanas,

dark brown in colour with woolly hair, and lips projecting beyond their noses. Like the Basutos a blanket of loud pattern fastened on one shoulder and under the other arm is their usual costume, and the children wear practically no clothes at all. The missionary, Mr. Jansen, has been here about thirty years, and has planted a number of *Eucalyptus globulus* and orange-trees. The former are now about 120 feet high, with trunks in proportion, and the orange-trees are much the finest I have ever seen anywhere. The country here is what books call "Park-like." It is undulating, covered with grass (now yellow), dotted over with bushes and small trees, and is quite varied compared to the country between Kimberley and Mafeking.

## LETTER VIII

How our trekking days are apportioned — More "sticks" — Yells and thrashings—Dust—Camel-thorns—Wait-a-bits—Birds and beasts—Difficulties of sketching.

BETWEEN SEKAMIS AND PALLA, BECHUANALAND, 13*th June* 1894.

WE have now had a real trial of trekking life, and so far it is the greatest success. It has, however, one great drawback in common with a good many other phases of life — there is not near time enough to do all one wants to do. Every one prophesied that if we didn't break down we should become frightfully bored from having nothing to do. Even I thought that there would always be ample time for sketching, walking, and riding. But far from it. This is how our day passes. We trek at about three in the morning till about seven. As the road is usually pretty jolty, and therefore not conducive to slumber, Mrs. Grey

and I sleep on for another hour after we stop, *i.e.* from seven to eight. During this time the tent is put up, and some water got, if possible, for our baths. Meanwhile the men have gone out shooting. We have breakfast together on the veldt about half-past nine or ten. After that till about half-past one, is free. I sometimes sketch, but I usually want to walk as well; or I ought to be writing journal, or washing clothes, or dusting out the waggon, or skinning birds, or darning my stockings (especially the last); and the time available is all too short. At one we have a cup of cocoa and a biscuit, and then pack up for another two hours' trek, from two to four. One has to pack everything in most carefully, as otherwise it would be either jolted to pieces or tossed out. Washstand, campstools, ladder, books, etc., are all located in our waggon, and have to be taken out and in at each trek. When the afternoon trek begins, Mrs. Grey and I usually go in the spider or ride. At four or half-past we outspan again; then I sometimes sketch, or write (as I am doing to you at this moment), with the

sun going down a great red ball in the west. It is too dark to go on sketching for long after five, and then we have dinner. This is hurried over to get the things packed in again, and away we go, trekking from half-past six or seven till ten or thereabouts. Now that there is a moon, Mrs. Grey and I either ride or go in the spider at first, and walk after. Sometimes I go on walking till the waggons outspan. Then we bundle into bed as quickly as possible, eating a biscuit and drinking a cup of cocoa or Bovril before going off to sleep. This time, from ten to three, is the only quiet time for sleeping; so one tries to make the most of it. The "boys" usually sleep under the waggons. Almost the only drawback of the life is the dirt and dust. For the first week the roads were muddy, and our buck-waggon got "stuck" several times—once for about eight hours. They had to use twenty pair of oxen to pull it out, taking the spans from the other waggons, and even then only succeeded after "off-loading" and much digging in front of the wheels. Our conductor told me that our oxen were not accustomed to

trekking, else we should have got out of the bog much more quickly. Our oxen would not pull with a will, nor all together. One lay down and had to be cruelly thrashed till he got up again; and, indeed, they were all thrashed most unmercifully. I suppose it can't be helped, but it is horrid to see; and all the time the drivers and leaders rush about along the line making day hideous with their yells and shrieks. Now we have passed the mud and got into the land of dust. It is inches deep on the roads, and flies up in thick clouds as you go along. Luckily it does not bother us when we are outspanned; but one is never clean, as everything that one touches is covered with it. Since I wrote from Willow Park we have travelled about 160 miles. The country has been mostly very flat, but one day we had a pretty view of low hills, and twice we have been near low *kopjes* (little hills), and once in a native village. The vegetation is utterly different to what I saw of it in Cape Colony. *There* all sorts of low shrubs and flowering plants grow out of the sand. *Here* it is all grass with very few

flowering plants. The grass is often three feet high or more, and at this time of year it is quite yellow and dead. Out of it grow quantities of bushes, some quite small, and some as large as hawthorns. The commonest is the camel-thorn, a kind of acacia with white thorns, sometimes several inches long; but their size and colour advertise them so well that they are easily avoided. There is another bush with very small leathery heart-shaped leaves, and thorns which divide into two, and then again into four, and sometimes into six points. A third has pairs of thorns, one straight and the other hooked back. But the worst of all is the well-named "Wait-a-bit," with small thorns in pairs, both hooked back, which you hardly see till you are caught fast.

Two days ago we reached the left bank of the Marico River, and now we are near the Limpopo. Along the banks of these rivers the trees are larger, and sometimes moderately good from the English standpoint. There are quantities of birds, some of perfectly gorgeous colours—blue, green, yellow, pink, scarlet, white, in varying

shades and combinations—and many of strange and interesting shapes. Animals are not so easily seen, but there are a good many small antelopes about. I saw a lot of spring-buck one day. This morning I saw two fascinating little creatures in a tree, like lemurs or small monkeys. They don't usually come out much by day, so it was rather luck seeing them. They are here popularly called "Night-Apes." There are many snakes—though we have seen none—most of them deadly poisonous. There are also hyænas, but neither have we seen these. The men of the party are always trotting about with their guns, and always complaining of the said guns, or the dogs, or something. Certainly they miss pretty often. Guinea fowl, small bustards, and francolins (commonly called, in this land of misnomer, pheasants and partridges) are the commonest. We have four dogs, and only one is of the least use. One was run over by the waggon the other day, right across the body. I never thought the poor brute would recover; but he is quite cheerful now.

My sketches are mostly bad. The air is so dry that it is almost impossible to put on a wash at all, and I hardly ever have time for more than a very hasty attempt.

## LETTER IX

Palla—The Derby—Landscape—Mopani trees—Larvæ of Botflies—Muddy water—Digging for water—Crossing the "Thirst land"—Waggons driven against branches—Nine imaginary lions—Palapsye—A broken and mended umbrella—Khama—A bath in a breakfast cup.

PALAPSYE, BECHUANALAND,
*20th June* 1894.

WE arrived here this morning and found a delightful bundle of letters awaiting us. We have now been practically three weeks without hearing anything of the outside world — even from a newspaper; so that you can imagine how we devour every word. Characteristically, there was *one* thing we did hear. When we were at Palla, Mr. G. and Mr. A. Grey rode into the village (we were outspanned two miles off) and saw one of the English Bechuanaland police. From him they inquired and learned who had won the Derby. I don't believe they asked for any other news.

My last letter was written from near Palla. Since then we have continued to trek through an almost absolutely flat country, dotted over with

MOPANI LEAF.

bush which varies in thickness and in the species of which it is composed, but which, as regards general effect in the landscape, hardly varies at all. Owing to it you can rarely see more than

three hundred yards in any direction. In one place where we outspanned, the bush was chiefly composed of Mopani trees — a shrub or small tree with a very curious evergreen leaf, almost like the outspread wings of a butterfly, the stalk taking the place of the body. The two halves usually fold together a little, instead of being quite flat. The commonest shrub of all is the camel-thorn, which I mentioned in my last letter. This being the beginning of winter, many trees are bare, and others are yellow and russet in their autumn colouring. We have had no adventures since I last wrote, and the life is very monotonous, though anything but dull. We have kept along the Limpopo for a long way; and this was a paradise to the men, because where there are trees and water, there there is game. Mr. G. Grey shot a hartebeest the other day; it is about the size of a red deer, and its meat was quite excellent. This particular animal was in very good health and condition, but when the skull was cut open to take off the horns, we found that both the top of the nasal passages

just under the floor of the brain, and also the cavities below the horns and above the brain, were full of horrible white maggots, about an inch long and very fat. You never saw so disgusting a sight. I put some of the maggots in spirits of wine to bring home.[1] Yesterday, both Mr. G. and Mr. A. Grey had shots at koodoo,[2] but missed. The latter came home wild with excitement about the sport.

For some days past the water has been dirty and scarce. It is often so dirty that you can't see the bottom of a cup which is half full of it and this we not only wash in, but drink; and Mr. G. Grey says it is remarkably good. But the tea does taste very nasty at times. I am becoming thankful for small mercies. When I left home I thought tea without cream poor stuff. Then I began to be thankful for fresh milk. Now tea with preserved milk, if made with clean

[1] These larvæ were sent to the Natural History Museum in London, and have proved to be a new species of Botfly, and probably belong to a new genus. An allied form has been found in an allied species of Hartebeest.

[2] An antelope nearly as large as a cow with long spiral horns.

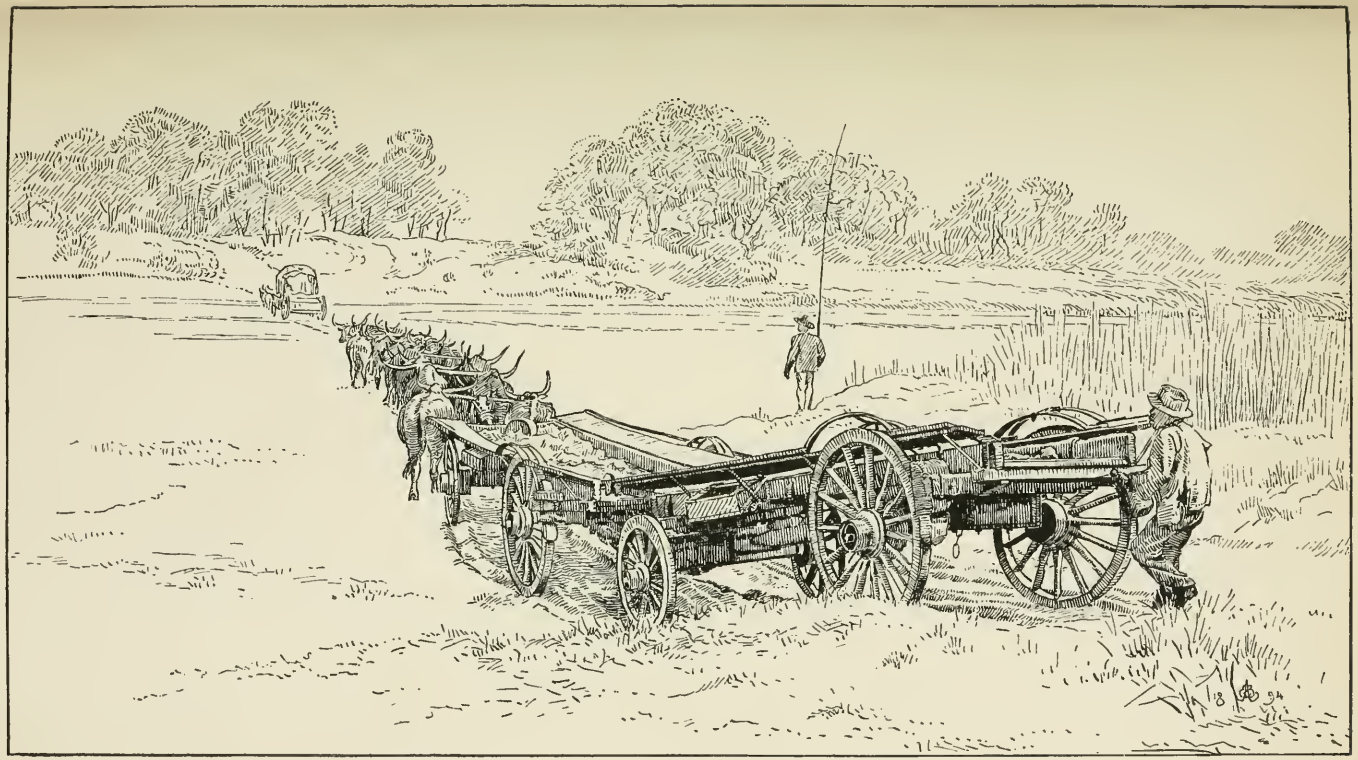
water, is quite delicious, and even with dirty water is tolerable.

Three days ago we had to cross forty miles of "Thirst land," for which preparations had

DIGGING FOR WATER IN A SANDY RIVER BED.

to be made. Mrs. Grey's and my part in this consisted in preparing some drinking water. Accordingly the cook's boy, Soul, was sent to fetch some. After about an hour he returned with a bucket full of the muddy mixture,

which had been collected by means of a tin pannikin from a deep hole dug in the dry sand of a river bed. (I have sketched that river bed, and when you see it you will not be surprised at its taking so long to get water from it.) We precipitated the mud in this by means of alum, then boiled and filtered it. But though we spent hours over this, we still had not enough, and tea and coffee had to be made with the muddy water. Mrs. Grey and I kept a small private store of the clean water in vulcanite water-bottles of our own, else we should have got none for either painting or drinking, as the men drank all the rest, and had some of mine too. The "men" means only white men, for all coloured men are called "boys." The difficulty in getting over the forty miles of "Thirst land" was the absence of water for the oxen and horses, and we had to arrange our plans accordingly. We trekked at night for ten miles (average pace, two and a half miles an hour). When we outspanned early next morning, the oxen were slowly driven back for five miles,



EMPTY TRANSPORT WAGGON CROSSING A SANDY RIVER DRIFT.

feeding as they went, to where there was a little water which *they* could drink, though too filthy for us; after which they were driven slowly back to camp. We then made three treks of four hours, with intervals of only two hours between, arriving at Mopani Pan at about nine next day. Though we have light loads, and travelled all night, our poor beasts were pretty well done up by that time. One of our drivers is not so good as the others, and does not make his oxen work evenly, so that one of his span was completely worn out, and it and its yoke-fellow had to be taken out and allowed to come here loose. The heavy sand of the roads is pleasant for those in the waggon—when the wind blows the dust away,—and I sleep during such treks like a top; but I have not yet learned to sleep when the road, as it was this morning, is like the dry bed of a river full of boulders, and everything jumps up and down in the waggon, including its human occupants. I lie on my back with my knees up, and support myself on my elbows and feet to lessen the jar. Mrs. Grey rolls and bounds

about, groaning when a worse jolt comes than usual, which, I am sorry to say, always makes me go into hopeless laughter. All our springs are more or less broken, but I don't think that it makes much difference. These wonderful waggons are not such paragons of excellence as they should have been. Our trek-chains break whenever a good strain is put on them, our springs are broken and bent, the strain is causing opening of the boards like in a ship after a storm. One thing has stood well, and that is the canvas tent over each, which so far remains entire, although the drivers appear to take a peculiar pleasure in driving them against the thorn-bushes. The other night, in a place where the road was extra wide and good, the men's waggon was driven against a great projecting branch, of which all the twigs had been torn off, so that the thick sharp-pointed spike stuck out in the most aggressively conspicuous manner. The canvas was injured, but wonderful to relate, was not ripped open.

If you hear that we have killed nine lions on

our way here, you can believe as much of it as you like. Some men in a waggon in front of us have spread the report along the road that we saw nine, and spent our time in pursuing them with rifles and revolvers. So much has this been believed, that our conductor met some men carrying rifles who had gone about with them ever since they heard the story, so as to be prepared for the lions' appearance.

We have most kindly been lent a hut to live in here for the twenty-four hours of our stay; its owner, Mr. Saddler, having vacated it for our benefit. Its shape is that of a magnified native hut, round, with high-peaked thatched roof, in which lizards run about. I am looking forward to Mrs. Grey's misery to-night if she fancies she hears rats in the roof.

The town is built on the slope of a hill, and there is a lovely view of blue hills to the north, which augurs well for the future of our trip. I wanted to sketch this view, so Mr. Grey procured one of the police horses for me to ride up to the place. The animal was very lazy,

and I thwacked him so hard with my umbrella that I broke the stick in two. (Do not imagine that I was cruelly urging him to unheard-of exertions: my ambition was only to make him keep up with Mr. Grey who was walking on foot!) As Bechuanaland stores do not boast of such rarely required articles as umbrellas, and as it was absolutely necessary for me to have one to shade me when sketching, my broken stick was given to a native to mend. It came back most artistically spliced with brass wire in ornamental patterns. The only drawback is that now the umbrella can neither be opened nor shut.

The chief Khama came to see our waggons this morning and appeared to admire them, but thought them too wide for the bush. (They are wider than is usual.) He is much like other natives in general appearance, to our undistinguishing eyes, and was of course dressed in European costume. He scarcely uttered a word, so I don't know how much English he knows. I am told that he is not likely to be succeeded by

any one who will be able to carry out his policy so well as he himself has done.

In telling you of our difficulties in getting water, I forgot to mention that once all we had for washing during twenty-four hours was exactly one cupful—and that black with mud. This not only did duty in the morning, but had to be reserved for subsequent use. Our hands get filthy again but a few minutes after washing, so that one must try and wash them at least once during the day; and the state of dirt in which one is obliged to go to bed is disgusting. If such are the pleasures of ox-waggon travelling, it is better to stay at home, you may say. Yet when Mr. Grey lately appealed to each of us all round to say whether, if we could at that moment suddenly project ourselves back to England, we should do so, there was a unanimous chorus of "No."

# LETTER X

Strayed horses—A moonlight ride—The spider left behind—Mr. Fitzwilliam is lost on the veldt—He finds his way back at night—Kopjes—Euphorbias—Flowering aloes—An oven on the veldt—Ant heaps—Nearly upset—Arrival at Bulawayo—Our abode there—The ruins of old Bulawayo—Insulting behaviour of the Matabili before the war—The commencement of new Bulawayo.

BULAWAYO, MATABILILAND,
*5th July* 1894.

HERE we are, arrived at the end of the first stage of our trekking—and perfectly successfully. And here again we find a delightful batch of letters awaiting us. You say that Sir Henry Loch thinks we shall never stand the journey. He is not the only man who thinks us crazy. The general view over the country is that we are crazy to come, and Mr. A. Grey crazy to bring us. People cannot believe we are not utterly bored with waggon travelling. On the contrary, I find one gets to suit oneself more and more to the situation, and, except for the dust and dirt

and the hurry, there are very few drawbacks to the life.

My last letter was from Palapsye, written just before we ought to have started to continue our travels. Our waggons had started the night before, and we were to ride and catch them up, accompanied by Mr. A. Grey's cousin, Major Grey, who joined us here and remained with us till we reached Tati. But as the moment for departure approached, a whisper ran round that the horses were lost. A hue and cry was set up, and after some hours they were recovered; but by that time it was too late to join the waggons by daylight. Accordingly it was settled that we should start when the moon rose between eight and nine; and as the waggons would meanwhile be going on, we would have about eighteen miles to go before we joined them. As everything that could had been sent on by the waggons, and we had expected to ride in the hot sun, we had kept out no wraps. Mrs. Grey got one of her husband's jackets, and, except that the sleeves were about

six inches too long, she managed well enough. I had nothing to put over my thin white cotton shirt except a bath-towel. So behold me heading the cavalcade on a cream-coloured pony, the said bath-towel gracefully disposed about my person or ballooning in the breeze! Before starting we all assembled in the Store (our host was the store-keeper), and the gentlemen drank success to our expedition in whisky-and-soda, all of us sitting in various positions on the counter. The first two miles of the ride were most unpleasant—the road consisting of heavy sand thickly mixed with boulders, like strawberries in whipped cream. Mrs. Grey very soon drew the line, and preferred bumping in the spider to stumbling over them on horseback. I rode all the way and enjoyed it much, except that I fully expected to come a cropper over the roots and stumps which project here and there in the track, and which you can't see at all by night. Before we reached the waggons we noticed that the spider was no longer near us. Mr. A. Grey rode back to see what had happened, and found that the mules

were thoroughly tired out by the heavy sand on the road, and poor Mrs. Grey, finding herself deserted, was despairingly resigning herself to spending the night in the spider on the veldt with only little Hendrik as a protector. Mr. Grey tied his horse behind the carriage and drove the mules while Hendrik whipped ; and in this way they at last reached the waggons about midnight.

We were now beginning to get into a country varied by kopjes from the eternal bushy plain through which we had hitherto passed ; and there was also a certain amount of big game, and with big game, the possibility of lions. The gentlemen used to start every morning at sunrise in hopes of killing some buck, but were not very successful. Mr. G. Grey had an excellent chance at a cock ostrich in full plumage, but just as he was about to fire, his horse ran in between him and the bird. Another day he wounded a magnificent koodoo bull, but could not follow its *spoor* (footprints). On the 23rd, Mr. Fitzwilliam and Major Grey went out together in one direction, and the other two men in another. Before

our afternoon trek the two latter returned, but not the two former. This did not make us anxious, as we expected they would follow us to where we outspanned for dinner. And sure enough while at dinner Major Grey appeared—but with anxious face, asking where was Mr. Fitzwilliam? It was now clear that the latter was lost, and to be lost in this country is no joke. They had followed a gemsbok.[1] Major Grey got off to fire and his horse got loose. Mr. Fitzwilliam continued to gallop on, and was seen no more. You can imagine what an evening we spent, speculating as to what had happened, and what Mr. Fitzwilliam would do. Mr. Grey and Major Grey were most anxious, the former saying that when lost, even people of experience on the veldt frequently lose their heads, and telling us of men who had been lost for days, and yet never were more than a few miles from the road; or who were never found at all. Awful visions of Mr. Fitzwilliam in a similar plight rose before us. But Mrs. Grey and I firmly maintained that we

[1] Large antelope with very long straight horns.

did not believe that Mr. Fitzwilliam would lose his head. We said he would be perfectly calm, and would reason as to the right course to take, and act accordingly. Indeed, so convinced was I of this, that my real fear was that he had met with an accident and was disabled. Major Grey rode back directly dinner was over to light a bonfire on a kopje, and to arrange for natives to follow the spoor as soon as it was daylight. We sat up till late, firing guns at intervals and wondering whether our lost companion had food, drink, or matches with him. When we went to bed we gave strict injunctions that we were to be waked if any news came; and as we undressed we told each other what brutes we felt for thinking of sleep at all, while poor Mr. Fitzwilliam might be shivering on the veldt. At about three in the morning we were waked by stentorian yells of "Hallo," "I say," "Hallo," and found Mr. G. Grey had been vainly endeavouring to make us hear that Mr. Fitzwilliam had turned up, adding a variety of scornful remarks on the soundness of our slumbers when we professed so much anxiety

as to his fate. He declared he had been shouting for several minutes at the top of his voice, to which we returned that had he used either our names or Mr. Fitzwilliam's we should have waked at the first call.

It appeared that Mr. Fitzwilliam had followed the gemsbok till his horse became so leg-weary that he could go no more. Then he got off and walked slowly back with him in the direction where he had left Major Grey. His watch marked 2.30, so there was no reason for hurry. After a little time he noticed that the sun was very low, and looking again at his watch, found it still at 2.30. He knew now that he could not get to the road before dark, and the moon did not rise till after ten. When the sun set he determined to lie down and wait for the moon before going further. He had no food and no matches, only some whisky, which he husbanded with care. He padded his coat well with dry grass to keep himself warm, for the nights are often frosty, and then went fast asleep. When the moon rose he got up, saddled his horse, and, guiding himself by

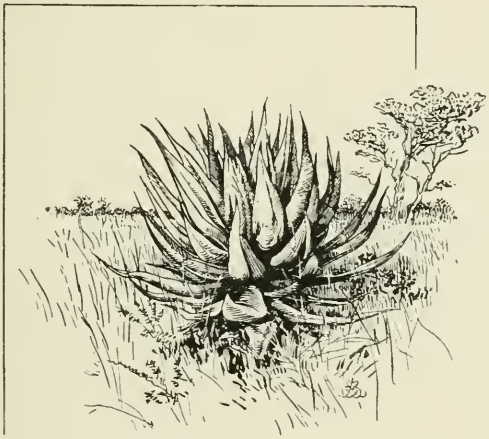
the stars, rode on till he reached the waggon-track. He followed this till he came to a camp, when he shouted to know if there was any white man there. It proved to be Major Grey's, and he, overjoyed, hastily provided refreshment for man and beast, after which Mr. Fitzwilliam rode on to our waggons. Thus happily ended this adventure.

We have neither seen nor heard any lions, but we are told that one killed a horse near Tati about a fortnight before we passed, and our "boys" were some of them quaking for fear at having to go through the district, and would scarcely go a yard away from the waggons at night. One night something was prowling round, for Major Grey's mules were very nervous; but it was probably a hyæna.

For several days before we arrived here we passed through some very curious country, dotted over with kopjes. Some of these are of granite; others are of some dark stone, and are covered with all sorts of extraordinary and beautiful trees and plants, just like gigantic rock gardens, the

huge blocks of which they are composed looking as artificial and unnatural in arrangement as any wretched little fernery stuck down on an English suburban grass-plot. The most remarkable of the shrubs growing on these kopjes are the big green fleshy euphorbias, looking like the seven golden candlesticks, only with seventy instead of seven branches. There were also baobabs, but none were near the road, so I didn't see any; and wild figs, wild oranges (I measured one: it was $13\frac{1}{2}$ inches in circumference, and as hard as a cricket ball), wild plums, and many new and curious trees and fruits. One tree has a leaf rather like a mopani leaf, with huge beans about a foot long dangling all over it. Another has a flat circular winged seed, as large as the top of a breakfast cup, with a globular centre prickly like a Spanish chestnut. Mr. Fitzwilliam brought us the seeds of a bush which he saw blazing red a quarter of a mile off. The seeds grow in clusters, each seed being winged and bright crimson in colour. There are also two plants which grow several feet high, and are extraordinarily handsome.

They have a tuft of thick fleshy cactus-like leaves at the base, and out of this grows a tall flower-spike. In one of the species the flower is like a long and narrow "red-hot poker" (*kniphofia*). The other has a branching flower-spike, each

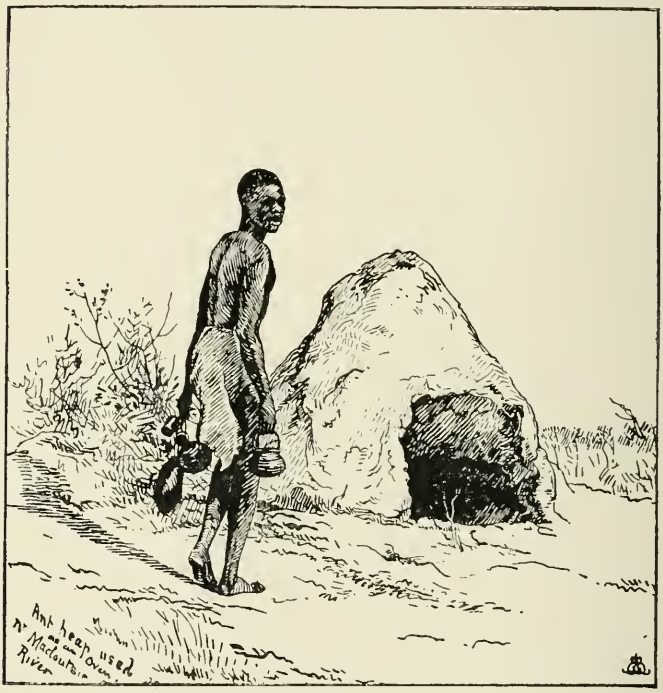


ALOE ON THE VELDT, BECHUANALAND.

branch being covered with pendant scarlet flowers. They are called here "flowering aloes."

We continued to pass sandy river beds at intervals, usually outspanning near them in order to get water by digging in them. The worst of this is that these outspanning places are apt to be extremely dirty, as every waggon stops at the

same place for the same reason. Close to the drift of the Macloutsie River I photographed an old ant heap, which some transport riders had used




ANT-HEAP OVEN.

as an oven for baking bread, by cutting out a hole in the side. These ant heaps are made of earth and become as hard as stone; indeed when walking at night, and sitting down to wait for the waggons (one never could walk slowly enough to

keep with them, if the road was rough), I soon learned to avoid an ant heap as a seat, however inviting looking, as stones seemed cushions compared to them.

The last two days before we got here were signalised by two narrow escapes of our being upset, once in the spider and once in the waggons. One of our leading mules, Stembok by name, has a strong will of his own, and when it is crossed he turns right round and faces you. As the spider's front wheels are too high to go under the body, this manœuvre is not an agreeable one. On this occasion one front wheel did get under somehow, and the other was hoisted wildly up in the air—how, I can't imagine; and the more I look at the spider, the less I can imagine. Luckily it was where we outspanned, so some one caught the unruly one by the head, and saved us from going over. The last night before we got here, Mr. Fitzwilliam and I were walking on ahead (the two Messrs. Grey had ridden on to Bulawayo the day before), when we came to a *spruit* (running stream) with very steep sides,

and on the south side a perpendicular drop at the bottom. We inquired of some Americans outspanned just beyond, whether this was the best drift, and were told it was; so we warned the conductor of what was coming, and got Mrs. Grey out of her waggon. It was very funny to see the waggons going into the drift with their serpentine lines of oxen in front; and in spite of most powerful screw-drags, almost shoving the wheel-oxen off their legs. And when one of them made a dangerous-looking lurch over, I saw Dennison put up his arms as if to support it—a perfectly futile proceeding had it really capsized. Dennison was nervous about the two tented waggons. However, all got through without further accident than smashing the pole of the spider, which was tied behind the men's waggon, although they swayed about in the most drunken manner.

Our poor brown pointer Jess was run over and killed this morning when the waggons started again, as she chose to lie down to sleep between the wheels. She was such a nice dog. Mercifully she did not live a minute after.

We passed through the new town of Bulawayo on the morning of the 4th, having been exactly five weeks trekking. This is supposed to be an extraordinarily quick journey, and has quite upset all the prophecies of the croakers. Dr. Jameson and Sir John Willoughby, who have a house between the old and new towns, about two miles from the latter, are living in tents and have given us their rooms. It makes one quite ashamed to accept so much kindness. I have Sir John Willoughby's room. This is a true and faithful description of it. It has mud walls, mud floor, thatched roof with no ceiling, doors made of two packing-case lids, and an unglazed window with shutter of rough boards. Furniture: a bedstead, one box upside down, some wooden shelves, a small strip of matting, an empty whisky-bottle doing duty as a candlestick, and (oh! luxury) a table! Dr. Jameson's room, occupied by Mrs. Grey, is much the same, only it has a six-inch-square looking-glass as well; and for the first time for five weeks she has been able to look at her back hair. The dining-room and kitchen are

close by, and I suppose it is owing to the heat of the latter that there were a few flies about. Mr. A. Grey asked Dr. Jameson's factotum, Garlick, whether the flies had been very troublesome in the summer, to which he replied, "Yes, indeed, sir; you couldn't see through them." The house

MATABILI HUT.

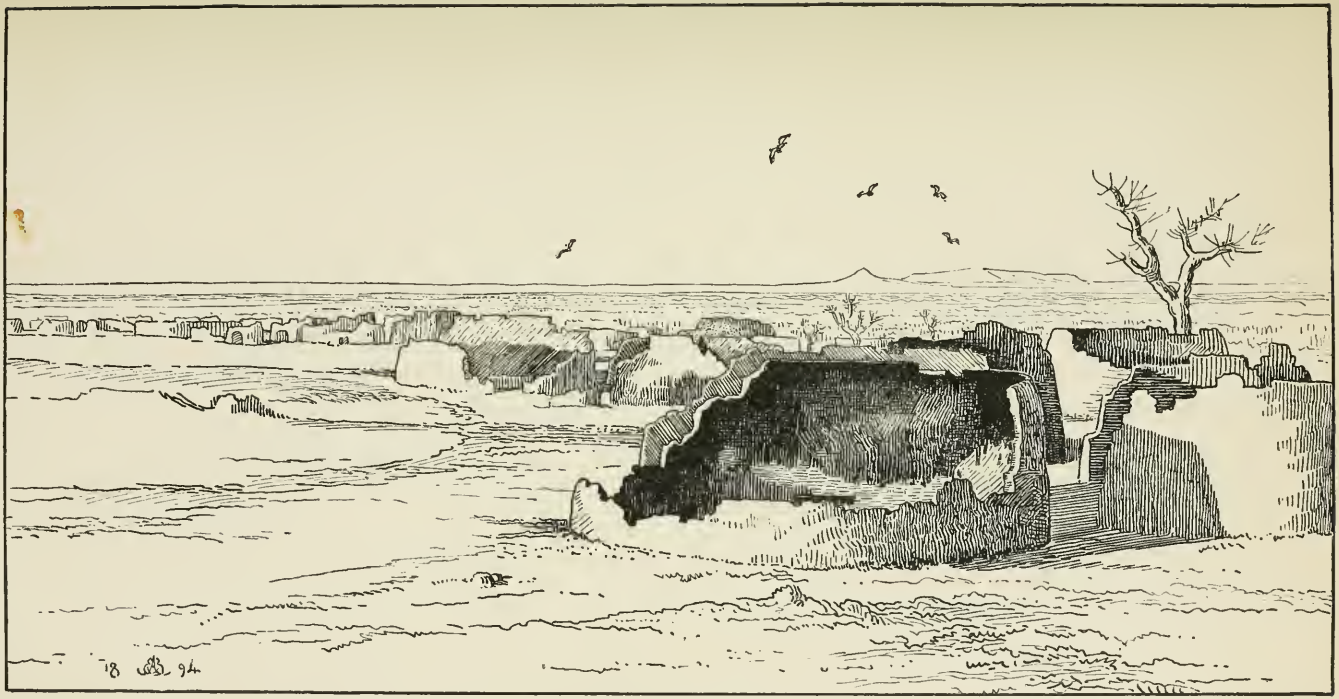
is very comfortable really, although my description of it may make you think it is an inappropriate abode for the Administrator of a territory as large as France. But this indifference to show is one of the things that make one proud of one's countrymen. Dr. Jameson dined with us the evening of the day we arrived. He, Mr. A. Grey, and Sir J. Willoughby have now gone on

to the Bonsor mine, and we join them there in the waggons early next week; so I hope we shall see more of him.

I have been sketching in Lobengula's old town of Bulawayo, which is about three-quarters of a mile from here. It was burnt by his order when he fled. It is on the top of a slope, and consisted of an enormous circle of red mud huts, about four deep, and close together, the space enclosed being about 600 yards in diameter. Within the circle were Lobengula's brick house and his wives' huts, with a wooden stockade round them. His *indunas* (chiefs or headmen) lived with their belongings in the circle of huts, whose broken and blackened walls still remain, though the thatch is all burnt off. They were only about four or five feet high to the eaves, and the rounded doorways not more than two or three feet high. Of Lobengula's house nothing but a low heap of bricks remains. It is very pathetic to see the great deserted kraal once so populous, and now tenanted only by a few screaming plovers flying round and round over it. One or two miserable-looking blacks

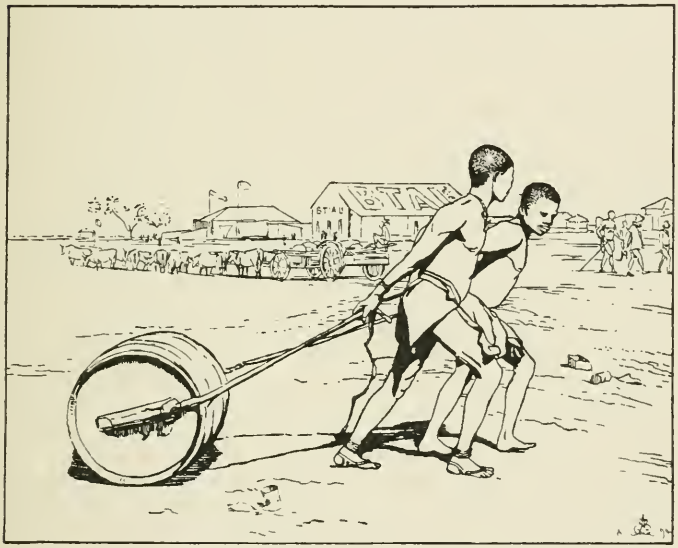
were squatted among the ashes grubbing for glass beads. Far away,—the only thing that breaks the monotony of the horizon,—you see Thabas Induna, the hill where Lobengula won his first victory. In spite of all his cruelties, one cannot help being rather sorry for the old king. I think that feeling is held by most of the people engaged in the war. The Matabili seem absolutely quiet, and have no sense of the ignominy of defeat. But their insolence before the war is almost beyond belief. They would enter an Englishman's waggon unbidden, pull the book he was reading out of his hand and throw it on the floor again and again, spit into his water-bottle, snatch off his hat, and if he tried to recover it, chuck a knobkerrie (club or knobbed stick) under his chin so as almost to shatter his teeth. These insults had to be borne in silence, as resistance would only have ended in murder by overwhelming numbers. But the forbearance and self-restraint of the white men when their turn came, seems to me to have been marvellous after such provocation.

Garlick has given me a delightful knobkerrie



RUINS OF OLD BULAWAYO.

made of rhinoceros horn, which he found in Lobengula's kraal when the troops entered it at the end of the war. We have been spending the morning in buying Matabili ostrich-



THE PRINCIPAL SQUARE, BULAWAYO. NATIVES DRAGGING A WATER-BARREL.

feather head-dresses, etc., which are unutterably filthy, and will have to undergo a severe course of fumigation before they are presentable.

The new town of Bulawayo at present consists of little more than a few iron-roofed sheds, with here and there a tent interspersed among them.

The most conspicuous building is a store, with the initials of the company to which it belongs writ large on the roof. This stands at the corner of the principal square — an unkempt stretch of red dust. Water is scarce, and has to be dragged up in barrels by natives or by oxen.[1]

[1] Within a year of our visit to Bulawayo so many brick houses have been built that I am told we should not recognise the place now. An elaborate system of water supply is in contemplation if not actually in progress.

# LETTER XI

Mrs. Colenbrander's hut—A native dance—Native views of the past and present—Leave Bulawayo—The Bembesi and Shangani battlefields—Leave the main road—Sixteen "sticks"—The düsselboom gives way—Reach the Selukwe Hills—The Bonsor mine—Gold panning—Crossing the Selukwe Hills—Melancholy result of ascending kopjes—We follow a honey-bird—Threshing *oofoo*—Crossing the Tokwe—Failure of attempts to blow up crocodile—Arrival at Victoria.

VICTORIA, 26*th July* 1894.

WE left Bulawayo on the 7th, arriving here two days ago, having had a very interesting journey, with about as near an approach to anything like adventure as we are likely to experience. The day we left we lunched with Mr. and Mrs. Colenbrander, who have built a set of large huts close to the new Bulawayo. One of these is decorated with leopard skins, which are spread on all the seats and tables, a large kaross covering the bed, the whole having an air of barbaric splendour. It was hoped that there would be a large number of natives assembled for the dance

which was to follow, but from various causes, comparatively few came. Among those that did come were two of Lobengula's brothers and several other chiefs. The dances, as at Johannesburg, consisted chiefly of rows of men in line, holding their knobkerries upright in one hand, and slowly lifting each foot alternately as high as possible, and bringing it down flat on the sole with a thump that made one's own soles ache to see it. This was accompanied by a monotonous chant of some eight or ten notes repeated endlessly with the same words. One of these phrases, we were told, was to the effect that as they had no corn that year to make beer, the white man should give it them. Another was in praise of the "good old times"; but, to judge by the singing, these much-vaunted times must have been lugubrious enough to make the old cow die on the spot. The women danced in a group by themselves, several of them with their babies tied on their backs, the little things taking the jogs and shakes to which they were subjected with absolute equanimity.

Both men and women were dressed in every variety of garment, from a suit of tweeds to a mere little piece of skin hanging from the waist. Brass anklets and bracelets were frequent, and every native carries a snuff-box, either round the neck or waist or stuck in his ear. For this latter position empty cartridge-cases are in much request. They are stuck through a slit in the lobe of the ear.

We left Bulawayo that evening with the waggons and three fresh spans of oxen. On the way we passed the scene of the two fights between the Chartered Company's forces and the Matabili on the march from Victoria to Bulawayo. Mr. G. Grey was in both fights, and by close questioning we got very vivid descriptions of them from him. The extraordinary folly of the Matabili strikes me more than anything else. They absolutely thought that they had only to fire a shot, and walk in and assegai our men without a struggle. They neglected almost every natural advantage, and showed neither tactics nor generalship of any kind.

Neither of the fights seem to have been nearly as severe as those in the Soudan War, comparing them with what one has heard of the latter. In the first fight the attackers were chiefly slave regiments. In the second they were the crack-and-hitherto-invincible pure Matabili regiments. Some of the men in these last were really very brave, and came on recklessly until they were shot down, but none got nearer than about 150 yards from the laager.

We reached the Shangani River early on the morning of the 11th, and when we woke up I called to John, our special "boy," to know on which side of the river we had outspanned, to which his lucid reply was "On this side." After leaving here we diverged from the main road across high grassy tableland, very bare of bush, where so few vehicles passed that the track was extremely indistinct, and occasionally every one was hunting about to find it at all. We went along the watershed, the streams on our right all joining the Lundi, and those on our left eventually reaching the Zambesi. Unfortunately,

the track was rather on the south side of the watershed, and every mile or so we came upon a boggy hollow forming the commencement of a stream, and equally every time the buck-waggon stuck in the bog. Then followed thrashings and yells for about twenty minutes or more, and then a second or even a third span of oxen from the other waggons was put on; and after more thrashings and yells we got through. You may wonder why the second span isn't put on at once. It ought not to be put on at all unless absolutely necessary, for the oxen of the first span get cunning, and if they are indulged won't pull at all till the second span is put on.

Our conductor was terribly disgusted with this road. Naturally his pride is to get over the ground as quickly as possible, with as few hitches as possible. But once he has poured out his griefs he sets to work with great energy and resource to overcome the difficulties. Nevertheless, he remarked, with an air of resigned despair, at the sixth "stick" in eight hours, that

"this gets kind of monotonous." The monotony was presently changed for the worse. After seeing a second span of oxen set to pull, and disliking to watch the thrashing the poor brutes had to undergo, we walked on in the dark as far as the next bog. There we were stopped by cries, and were presently overtaken by Mumbu, one of our lately-acquired Mashuna boys, who said, "Düsselboom broke," and departed. We retraced our steps, to find the buck-waggon still in the hole, while the sound of the axe betrayed where a tree was being cut down to replace the düsselboom (pole). Meanwhile vigorous efforts were still being made with the two spans of oxen to move the waggon, and just as we got back we heard a crack, and away went the twenty-eight oxen up the hill at a run, leaving the waggon behind. The iron-work in front of it had broken. "It would take a blacksmith two days' work to repair it, and, indeed, only a professional waggon-maker could do it, and he supposed he would have to remain there for days while the other waggons went on to

fetch a blacksmith." Such were our conductor's melancholy prognostications, and with such a prospect we retired to bed. But his pessimistic feelings having now evaporated in words, he off-loaded the waggon, had it dug and hauled out by the "boys," put in his new düsselboom, fixed it to the waggon by an ingenious arrangement of chains in place of the broken iron-work, reloaded it, and was ready to start again in four or five hours.

These "sticks" recurred about sixteen times, but as there is, as Dennison says, considerable monotony about them, I will describe no more. At the last one the düsselboom gave way again, the only wonder being that it had held out so long, but Dennison had anticipated this, and had got another one ready, which we still have on.

There were extraordinary variations in temperature all along this road at night, the hollows being very damp and cold, with every now and then on the hillsides quite a warm spot. I fancied that the slopes facing north were warmer than those facing south, as the former get more

heated during the day; but I may have been mistaken about this. There was often frost in the early morning, and one day the cook showed me a thick lump of ice which he had taken out of the kettle which had hung under the waggon all night.

For the last few miles we were in more hilly ground, and prospectors for gold had been continually passing. The result was any number of veldt fires, which sometimes look very fine in the distance with their great columns of smoke by day and lurid glow in the sky at night, but which are most odious from all other points of view, as they destroy the bush and make the great plains a sheet of black. The dust from this is so fine that it gets inside all one's clothes, and the consequent washing required is serious. At last we reached the Selukwe Hills, and outspanned near the Bonsor mine, where Mr. Grey rejoined us. The road here, if road it may be called, ceases. A few Scotch carts (light two-wheeled waggons) have passed along, but no tent-waggons had ever done so. From this

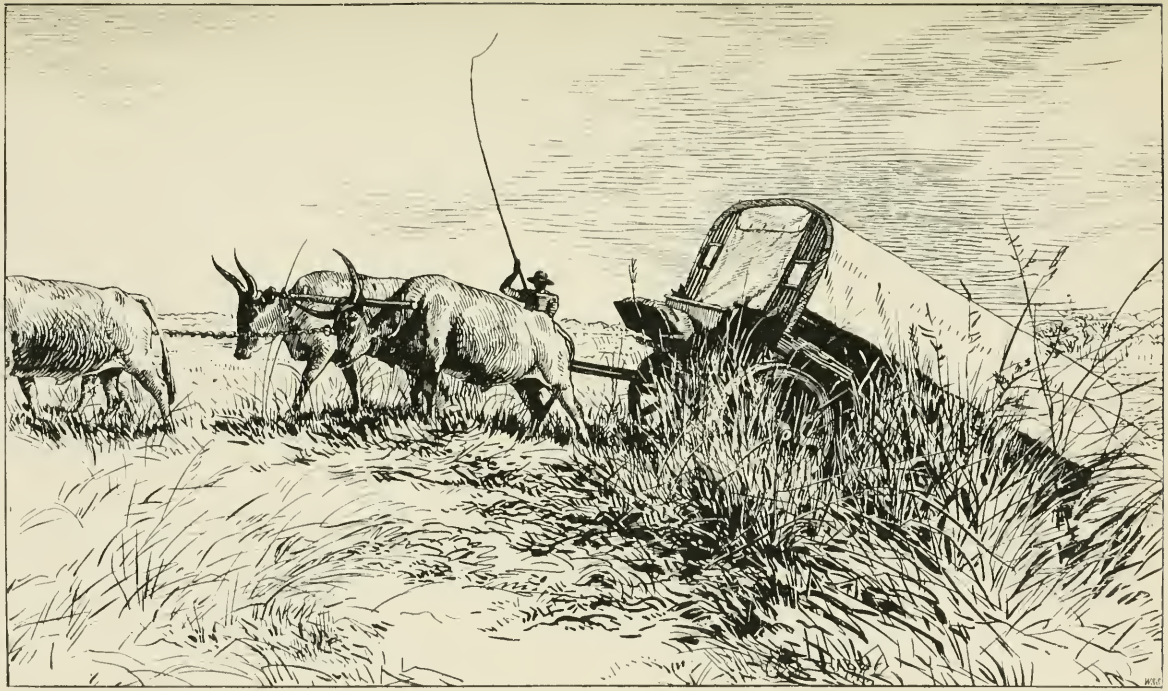
time till we got near to Victoria we travelled almost entirely by day, as we should almost certainly have been upset had we trekked by night. The waggons started one morning at 7.30, with Mr. G. Grey as pioneer cutting the trees before them, while the rest of us went to see the Bonsor mine. It consists of a shaft newly sunk on the site of some prehistoric workings, the dug-out holes of which are still visible; while close by are little pits and grooves in the rock believed to have been worn by grinding the quartz. Even the stones with which they ground it still lie beside or in the holes. To allow of our going down the shaft a kind of seat had been rigged up, attached by a rope round a hand-windlass, and in this, guiding ourselves by our feet from hitting the walls of the shaft, we descended one by one, some sixty feet to the bottom. The ancient miners, whoever they were, had gone down within about four feet of this, and the question was why they had stopped there? Were they driven out of the country or had the gold come to an end at that depth?

It is now believed that here at any rate it was not from the latter cause, but whereas near the surface the gold lies in the quartz free, at the lower level it is combined with pyrites, and it is only within the last few years that chemical processes have been discovered which permit of its being extracted from this in a way that pays. A small drive of some ten or twenty feet has been made from the bottom of the shaft across the quartz reef bearing the gold. At Johannesburg the gold-bearing strata that I saw are gray-coloured, and not at once distinguishable from the surrounding rock. In this district the gold is found in white quartz (if streaky, like bacon, so much the better) between layers of dark reddish-brown "slate." Here the quartz reef is vertical, and extends along the surface above ground for more than a mile. Experience shows that as a rule when the extension above ground is as much as that, the extension below is also considerable. The "slate" is a metamorphosed aqueous stratum. All this I gathered (I hope correctly) from Mr. M'Intyre, the engineering

manager, who took infinite pains to explain and show us everything. We were afterwards shown some "panning" of the quartz from here and from the Dunraven mine (where they have come on three gold-bearing reefs of different thicknesses), and though the quartz thus panned was so coarsely crushed that among pieces of the size of peas taken up at random we could see the gold, yet the gold left after the panning was over was considerable in amount.[1] When we left the mine we went down a pass through lovely wooded hills, along which the waggons were slowly threading their way. The trees were mostly either mountain acacia or mahobo-hobo, this last resembling a magnolia more than anything else, only the leaves are coarsely ribbed and wider, and it bears a fruit which we are told is very good eating. We had not gone far before we saw one of the waggons resting in a fainting condition (if waggons can be imagined to faint) against a tree, while all

[1] Panning consists in shaking some finely-crushed gold-bearing rock in a basin of water, until the gold, being heaviest, forms a fine sediment at the bottom, the rest being carefully poured off.

the drivers, leaders, conductor, and assistants were employed in trying to hoist it up so as to get it past the tree. Our contingent of men materially assisted in that process, and what between digging on one side and shoving on the other, they at last succeeded in righting it, but, alas! no longer in its pristine beauty, for all one side of the tent was battered in, and all my dressing and drawing things, which were hung on that side, were scattered in wild confusion, some spoiled and some lost. However, the damage was not as great as I at one time feared, and I have had no irreparable losses. This over, poor Dennison had to rush forward to the buck-waggon, which had taken the opportunity to get stuck ahead of us; and so it continued. No sooner had one waggon got past a critical place than another was in one. Sometimes the slope of the hill at right angles to the direction of the track was so great that the waggons were only saved from capsizing by four men hauling with reims on the opposite side, and here Mr. M'Intyre's strength was invalu-



WAGGON COMING OUT OF A DRIFT.

able. Sometimes a very steep dip with rocky sides and bottom would occur, and the absence or presence of a small stone (and there were always plenty of both small and big ones) at the critical moment would determine whether the waggon went over or not; or a turn would be so sharp that many trees would have to be cut to allow of the oxen getting sufficiently in a straight line to be able to pull. It was really very exciting to watch. At last we got through the worst of the pass without an upset, but the poor spider following behind got the bolt joining the under-carriage to the body jerked out, and the four mules, pulling the driver and front wheels after them, left the rest mildly but firmly in a hole. Luckily this was close to where the waggons had outspanned, and the resourceful Mr. G. Grey managed to mend it somehow in the course of the evening; and by always getting out whenever the road was more than usually covered with rocks and boulders, and by continual tieing together with reims, we have actually got it here with only one more

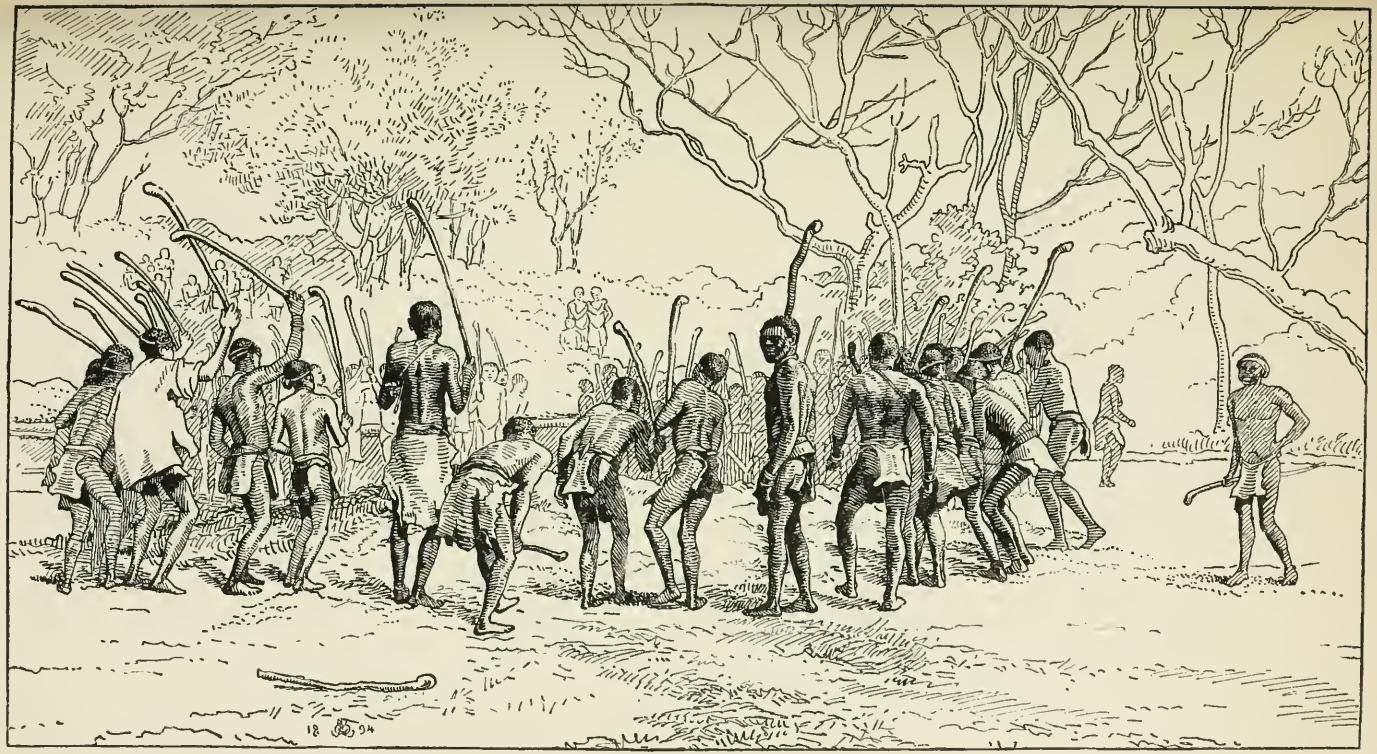
breakdown. After getting through the Selukwe Hills the road got much better, or rather, the grass plains were smooth enough, and spruits only came at intervals. We lost a whole day through our two black guides taking us wrong, and thus we only succeeded in going eighteen miles on the right road in four days. Extra delay was caused by the "long-waggon" (perch-pole) of the buck-waggon getting badly cracked in crossing a spruit on the wrong road. We had immediately to outspan, and as no suitable tree could be found to replace it, it had to be tied up with reims wound round it while wet, which shrunk when drying, so as to hold extremely tightly and firmly. Reims are one's salvation in this country. Dennison shot a beautiful reed-buck this day, which I spent my time in sketching, while Mrs. Grey and Mr. Fitzwilliam climbed up to the top of a neighbouring kopje. She came down almost in tears, and looking like a prickly hedgehog. You never saw such a sight. Her whole dress, inside and out, was one mass of prickles: you could hardly

see an inch of the stuff of which it was made. These prickles are seeds about half an inch long, ending in four little points, which hold on like grim death. You can't brush them off; they must be picked off by hand. The plant grows in great profusion wherever there has been native cultivation, and as the Makalangas always live at the tops of the kopjes for fear of the Matabili, and grow all sorts of plants in the crannies of the rocks, you invariably find this abominable weed in such places. So bad is it that I am almost afraid to go up kopjes now.

All through this district there is a good deal of game, and riding about I constantly saw the spoor of various kinds of buck, and sometimes the animals themselves, as well as jackals and huge baboons. One day we galloped some way after several of these, until they got to ground where we could not follow them. Another day, when I was out riding with Mr. G. Grey and Mr. Fitzwilliam, we saw a honey-bird which perched near us on a tree and began uttering its chattering note. We followed it as it went from bush to

bush for some way, till we came to a tree from which someone had previously cut out a bees' nest with an axe. The bird still kept chattering and flew on, so we followed it again for about a hundred yards, when it stopped once more. We examined the trees beside us, and presently found one which was quite hollow, and through a small hole we could see the honeycomb inside, but as we had no axe we could not cut the tree open. Then the bird left off chattering, and we saw no more of it. What a fraud it must have thought us! It is a very insignificant-looking bird, smaller than a thrush and dirty-gray or drab colour, as far as I could see. The native superstition is that if you do not give the bird some of the honey to which it leads you, it will lead the next person it finds to a snake or a lion.

We are surrounded now with native servants, with fine black skins and the minimum of clothes. They are just like children, thoughtless, callous, and good-humoured. You have to tell them the same thing over and over again every day, as they never remember a general order. Some-

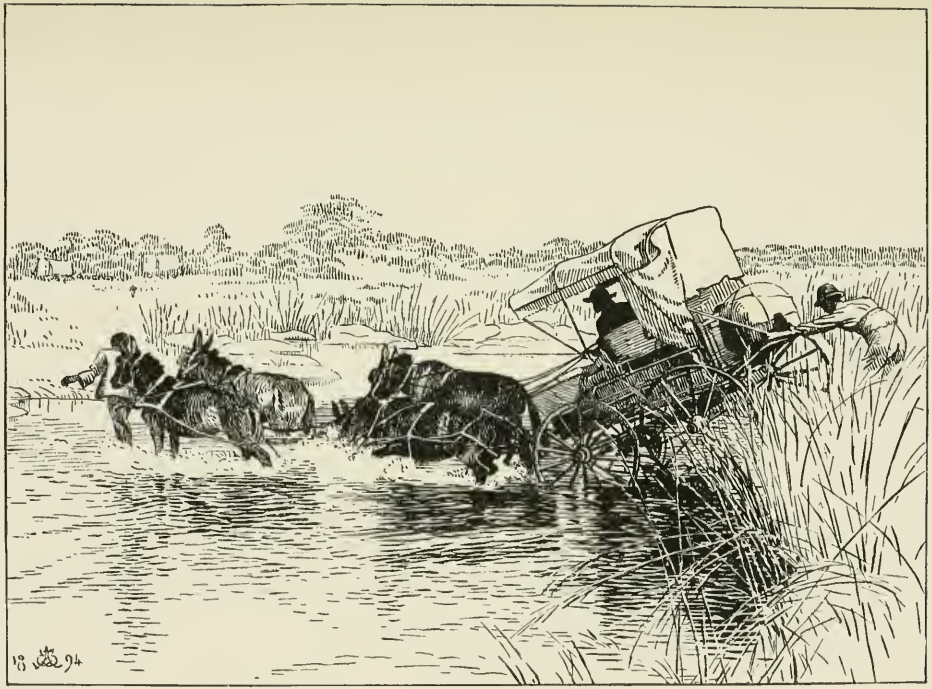


NATIVES THRESHING *OOFOO*.

times I surreptitiously try to draw their portraits, but they don't like it, and shift somewhere else before I have done more than a stroke or two. Some natives are very finely-built men, but most are rather poorly made, and of low type.

One day, as Mr. A. Grey was riding, he heard singing in the bush some way off, and on going to see what it was, found a number of men, women, and children threshing *oofoo* (a kind of millet), who immediately on his appearance took to flight. They presently returned, however, and he then went to fetch the rest of us. They had a threshing-floor, round which were arranged platforms of branches about three or four feet high, on which were great heaps of unthreshed grain. In the middle, on the ground, was the oofoo they were threshing, and round it was a circle of about forty men and ten women, each with a new white-peeled club rather like a heavy hockey-stick, with which they threshed, hitting with the convex outer side of the knob. All the time they sang and danced round the heap, the blows coming down in regular time to the singing. The songs were

all short, of one or two phrases only, both as to music and words, and mostly descending somewhat chromatically. One especially was rather like irregular chimes, ending on what would be the third of our scale. But they sang so out of tune, and their intervals were often so unexpected, that it was impossible for me to say what their scale was. The songs were not specially minor in key. In the intervals for rest between the songs (each song was repeated *ad nauseam* without a pause), they drank Kaffir beer. Mr. G. Grey ordered the *induna* (chief) to fetch a calabash (hollowed-out gourd) of beer for him to drink. It was curious to see the chief of all these men, who could have crushed us in a minute had they been so minded, after a look at Mr. G. Grey, humbly go and lift up the calabash and bring it to him without a murmur, while the rest of the natives stood gazing at us. I didn't half like it, but I expect it is right to impress them with our "moral superiority." While we were there the women were kept at that part of the circle which was farthest away from us. Mr. G. Grey says we are



SPIDER CROSSING THE TOKWE RIVER.

very lucky to have seen this threshing dance, as the natives will not do anything of the sort to order, and you only get the chance by chance.

On the 21st we reached the Tokwe River, the rocky drift of which was somewhat troublesome for the waggons to cross. Mr. G. Grey had procured some dynamite to explode in the water in hopes of stunning a crocodile; and while the waggons were crossing the drift we repaired to a large deep pool a little way off, threw in the dynamite, and waited anxiously for the result, cameras in hand. After a pause, two or three little fishes floated to the top, and nothing more. Mr. G. Grey saw the marks where a crocodile had been lying on a sand-bank, but that hardly consoled us.

Yesterday morning the two Messrs. Grey rode on to make arrangements for our stay here. We were still about seven miles off when we inspanned after dinner. Mrs. Grey and I walked in front of the waggons all the way, accompanied by the two dogs. About two miles from the town we heard footsteps in front. The dogs rushed forward

barking, and then equally quickly rushed back and kept cowering behind us. The terrible danger from which they fled turned out to be Mr. G. Grey, who came to meet us and show us where in the town we were to outspan, and we walked on with him. Somehow we missed the right track in the town, and wandered about trying to find our abode, knocking people up from their first sleep, and generally being a nuisance, till at last we got to our destination, after being four hours on our feet. I don't wonder at our missing the track, for, close to the town there are dozens, all just alike; and it was quite dark with no moon, and no lights in the houses. Most of the houses are set down apparently perfectly casually on the veldt, and at considerable intervals. Only about fifty whites live here, of whom three or four are women. The town is much more picturesquely situated than Bulawayo, with pretty hills all round; but the veldt itself close by is ugly just now, the grass being short and eaten of locusts, and with scarcely any bush on it.

## LETTER XII

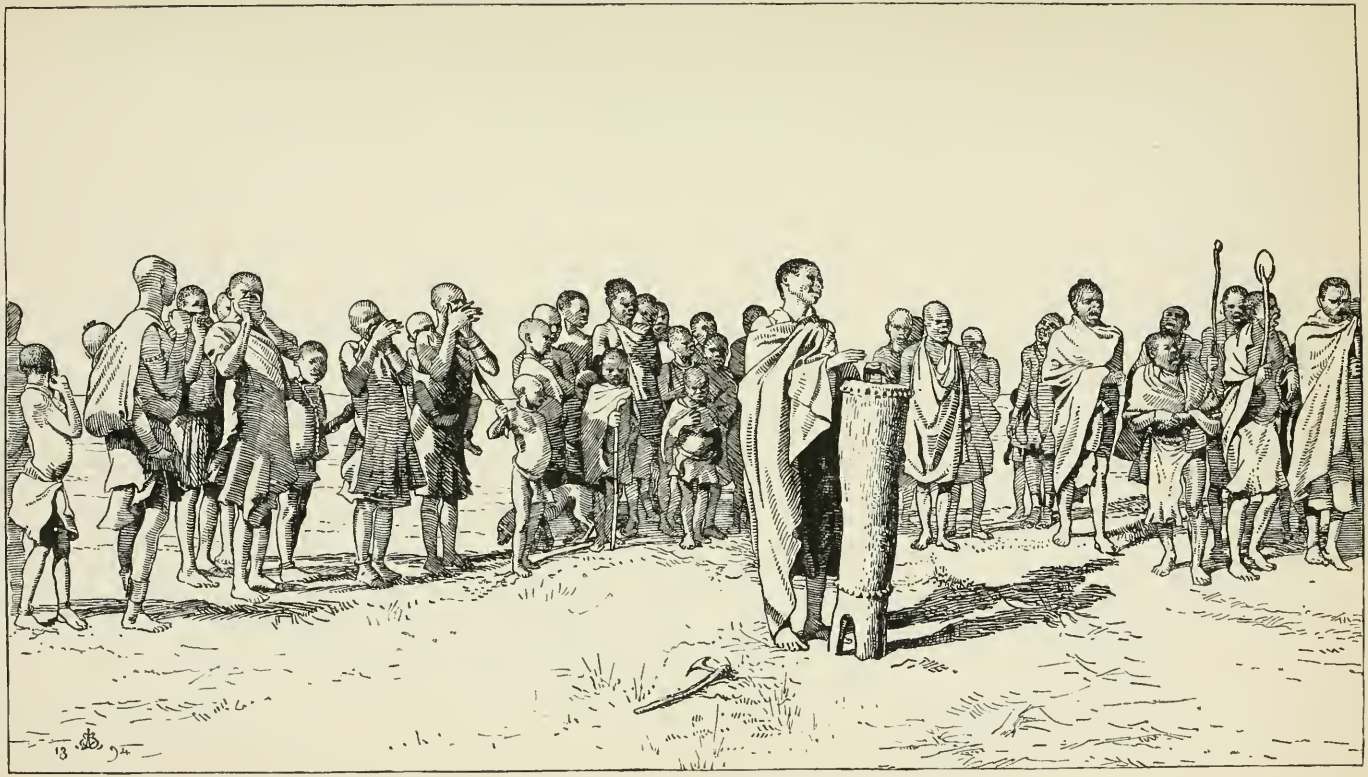
Visit to two Makalanga kraals—Offerings to ancestors—A native chorus of welcome—The spider breaks down again—Zimbabye ruins—The fortress—A lion story—Natives carving wooden bowls—The Zimbabye temple—A walk on the wall—Cats and dogs in church—Shoeing oxen.

VICTORIA, 30*th July* 1894.

THREE or four days ago Mrs. Grey and I went with Mr. Egghart and Captain Brabant to see two kraals (native villages) about three miles from here. They are built on two smooth rounded granite kopjes, rising like huge blisters on the grassy plain. Their inhabitants all came out to meet us when they knew Captain Brabant (the native commissioner) was there, singing, dancing, and waving their knobkerries. The women joined with shrill prolonged howls, at the same time holding their hands upright in front of their faces with the palms together, and moving one hand a little, back and forwards from the other,

so as to produce a wobbling in the note. These women had their bodies tattooed in horizontal lines close together. We were taken through the kraal and over some granite boulders (where the stench was appalling) to the entrance of a cave in which eighty or more of the inhabitants took refuge when attacked there last year by the Matabili, before the war. Fortunately the cave proved a sufficient protection. Just below the kraal, on the flat, is a scrubby-looking little cotton-tree which, Captain Brabant told us, is held sacred by the people of the kraal, as in some way representing their ancestors; and in spring-time when it is bursting into fresh life they make offerings to it of beer and meal. While we were there it did not seem that much attention was paid to it, and the cattle had gnawed it unrestrained. It is not an indigenous plant in this part of the country, and this one has been planted by the natives, who look upon its survival as a special mark of favour from their dead ancestors.

By this time a great crowd had collected, singing open-mouthed, and led by a man with a



A NATIVE CHORUS OF WELCOME.

drum about four feet high, on the top of which was stretched a piece of skin about a foot in diameter. He hit this near the edge with the palm of his hand near the wrist, producing a comparatively deep note, and with his fingers in the middle to produce a higher note. He always thumped it in three time—low note once, high note twice—with unvarying regularity, and with absolute indifference as to whether the crowd around him were singing in four time or three. The singing was much of the character we had heard before, only here the tenors and basses were more or less separated into groups, and at times the singing was in parts, like a catch, different people coming in at different times. Sometimes there would be solos, with the chorus singing a word or two at intervals, and a regular chorus at the end of each verse—if verse it could be called when the same words were repeated each time.

We have just come back from our long-wished-for expedition to the Great Zimbabye ruins, where we stayed two days, and would have liked to stay twenty. The ruins are about seventeen miles from

here. Mr. Egghart's waggon went on the night before with our "boys" and all the provisions, and we started next morning, the men on horseback, and Mrs. Grey and I in the spider. A new iron bolt had been put in it in place of the one lost in the Selukwe Hills, and trusting in this we went gaily forward till we came to a boggy spruit, into which we boldly drove. But put not your trust in blacksmiths. As happened before, the mules and front wheels went cheerfully on, leaving the body with Mrs. Grey and myself in it, stuck in the bog. We got out as best we might, and proceeded to photograph the situation, and were thus found by the gentlemen, Mr. G. Grey muttering that he believed we thought of nothing but our photography. Examination of the broken iron-work made even him despair of mending it sufficiently well to enable us to take the spider on to Zimbabye. So we made a kind of platform over the front wheels and pole, tied up all our goods in bundles and fastened them on this with reims. Two mules were to draw this novel carriage, and Mrs. Grey and I with heavy feet

prepared to start on our six-mile tramp in the broiling sun. But relief was to come. At this juncture up rode Mr. Gale, the engineer at one of the neighbouring gold mines, and Mr. G. Grey appealed to him whether he thought it possible to mend up the spider. He looked, said Yes, and with reims he did it. We mounted once more—but now with only two mules, as Stembok's habit of turning slap round would have been fatal,—and at somewhat greater speed than that of a funeral march, proceeded successfully to our destination. I may add that a new bolt was once more put into the spider, and that it bent hopelessly the first day it was used. After that we determined to stick to reims.

At Zimbabye we found tent and waggon ready close to the temple. To the north of us was the high steep kopje, on the top of which are the ruins of the ancient fortress. You climb up the kopje by a winding path, and it is not until you turn round the western shoulder of the hill that you see the native kraal, and to the right of that the gigantic smooth granite rocks, piled one above

the other, which form the natural defences on the north side of the fortress. The chinks between these boulder-like rocks were once all carefully walled up ; and having squeezed through one of them, we found ourselves in the fortress itself, in the midst of a perfect labyrinth of half-ruined walls, with narrow winding passages, crumbling stairways, curved buttresses, and all sorts of devices for defence, the whole overgrown with tangled vegetation, and the rocks covered with lovely creepers and trees with long hungry snake-like roots lodged in the crevices. The outer wall of the fortress crowns the kopje on the south side, and is almost continuous with the cliff below it, so that from a distance it is not always easy to see where the one begins and the other ends. From here you see the country spread out before you, fantastic kopjes and exquisite blue hills in the distance, and at your feet, on the yellow grassy plain, the Zimbabye temple enclosure, filled, as the circle of a coronet is with velvet, with luxuriant vegetation. The masonry is all dry-stone, and the stones, which are not

ROCKS AT ENTRANCE OF ZIMBABYE FORTRESS.

much larger than bricks on their outer surface, are laid with marvellous regularity. They are usually slightly wedge-shaped, so as to permit of being built into curves. At places there were signs of furnaces, apparently without chimneys, for the whole of the walls near them, both inside and out, had turned orange-red from the heat. Both Mr. G. Grey and Mr. Gale averred that the modern native could not produce heat enough in the space to have had such an effect on the surrounding stones.

That evening after dinner we sat over our camp-fire, and Captain Brabant told us some of his experiences among the natives. He says that they are much pleased at our conquest of the Matabili. When the telegraph wire was first put up they had an idea that no Matabili would be able to pass under it without being killed, and came to him with sorrowful complaints when they found this was not so. They believed a traction-engine to be a cannon which would with ease sweep the Matabili from the face of the earth. Lion stories succeeded, the best being one told

by Mr. Gale, of one of the post-riders whose horse fell sick and died on the road, so he left it and walked on. After some time he became aware that he was being followed by a lion, which stopped when he stopped, and went on when he went on, always keeping about the same distance behind him. Evidently it meant to wait till night to spring upon him. He knew that a few miles ahead was a deep drift in a river, and on the opposite bank higher up was a farm. He went down the drift, put a large ant heap between himself and the lion, hastily stuck his stick in the ground and hung his hat on it so that it should just show above the top of the ant heap, and then (still keeping the mound between himself and the lion) rushed down into the water, where the bank concealed him. Then he hurried up stream till he got to the farm. Next day the ground round the ant heap was found torn up in all directions, and the hat had been reduced to a pulp. I don't think Mr. Gale vouched for the truth of this story. It does really seem to be true that lions were killed at Zimbabye not long

ago. Certainly the long grass, often ten feet high, which abounds there, would make admirable cover for them.

Next morning we again examined the fortress and the kraal beside it. Here two natives were

NATIVES CARVING WOODEN BOWLS, ZIMBABYE.

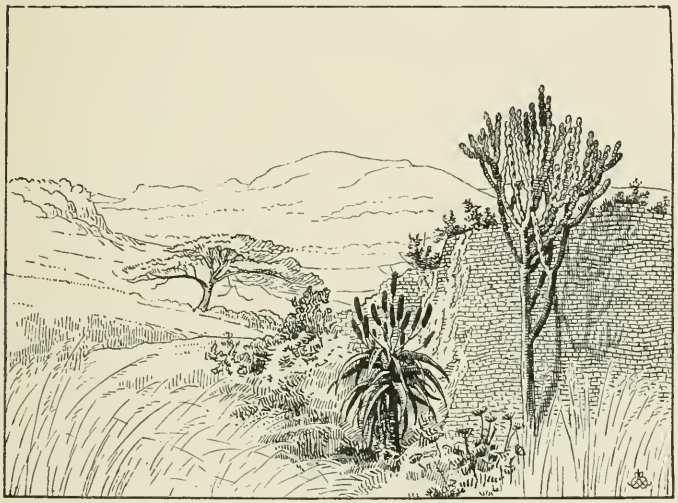
engaged in carving wooden bowls. One of them was delicately hacking small chips off the outside of the bowl, with a small native-made adze, the blade of which was about four inches long, and the cutting edge about one inch wide. He had

several of these with the blades set into the handles at various angles. One had the edges curved in at the sides. The other man was hollowing out a bowl, which he grasped firmly between his feet, while he scraped out thin shavings of wood with a small iron loop, with cutting edges on both sides, fixed into the end of a wooden stick. We tried to buy these tools, but they refused to part with them at any price, saying they could not replace them.

We spent the afternoon in the temple. The workmanship of its walls is similar to that of the fortress, but if possible better, and with some ornamentation in parts.[1] It consists of a great irregular oval, with sometimes three concentric walls only a few feet apart and about thirty feet high. At the end opposite the entrance, and just within the outside wall, is the tall solid cone-shaped tower of perfect masonry; but you do not see it till you get close up, because of the trees and creepers that fill the enclosure. The

[1] The reader is referred to Mr. Theodore Bent's book on *The Ruined Cities of Mashonaland*, for plans, illustrations, and description of the Zimbabye buildings.

creepers are like the lianas one reads of in accounts of Brazilian forests,—long rope-like stems climbing up to the tops of the trees and down again, and embracing everything. The whole place was wonderfully impressive. Within, the



VIEW BETWEEN ZIMBABYE FORTRESS AND TEMPLE.

great tower, the work of an unknown race at an unknown time, the sunlight flecking the delicate pale gray of its stonework, the sacred enclosure now wholly appropriated by a luxuriant jungle of half-tropical vegetation of richest green, cool and shady. Without, the bare walls in the blazing

sun, the orange-coloured grassy plain and groups of weird-looking fleshy euphorbias and scarlet-flowered aloes. We wound up our inspection of the walls by mounting the outside one, and walking round on the top of it. It begins by being about thirteen feet wide, and gradually narrows to about four. Most of the party soon got down again, but some of us went on as far as was possible. While we were on the narrowest part of the wall, and I was beginning to feel the position none of the most comfortable, Mr. G. Grey meanly took the opportunity of photographing us. Do you not think it speaks well for my magnanimity that I have not retaliated?

On Sunday evening after our return here we went to church, but the service was somewhat marred by a small terrier, who sat in the gangway and gnawed the matting the whole time. The clergyman said to me afterwards that he had quite ceased to mind the presence of dogs and fowls, which it is almost impossible to keep out, and told how at Umtali a cat had once come in during service and taken a flying leap across

the reading-desk into the arms of the preacher, where it lay purring during the rest of the sermon.

Several of our oxen had become very footsore on the way here and had to be shod before going further. The animal to be operated on is thrown down and its legs tied to the düsselboom, and the little flat iron shoes are nailed on after holes have been bored in the hoofs with a fine gimlet. I don't think it hurts them when carefully done, but they get up after it is over, looking wildly scared. They are too stupid to allow themselves to be shod as a horse does. Our horses often lose their shoes on the veldt, but neither they nor any one else seem to mind, and they just go on without till we reach the next place sufficiently civilised to produce a blacksmith.

## LETTER XIII

Leave Victoria for Charter—"Charter flats"—Magoussy trees—Oranges—Granite kopjes and "Kaffir booms"—Soft water from granite—Climate—The oxen begin to get weak—Mumbu—How puff-adders strike—Twisting reims—Ant heaps—Flowers in drought—Arrival at Salisbury.

SALISBURY, *12th August* 1894.

THIS will be an extremely dull letter, for our eleven or twelve days' trek from Victoria to this place has been thoroughly uneventful, and without any novelty of conditions. For most of the way the track went over the "Charter flats,"—a long line of watershed forming a high bare plateau about 4000 feet above the sea, the streams going into the Zambesi on one side, and into the Sabi on the other. At this time of year the grass everywhere is much burnt, and the result when seen close by is very ugly. It is still more ugly when the young green grass comes up through the ashes; and it then reminds me of nothing so

OUR CAMP A FEW MILES NORTH OF VICTORIA, 31ST JULY.

much as those black and green tablecloths so characteristic of the English lodging-house. However the country has redeeming features, especially if you get a mile or two away from the road on either side. The scrubby patches of wood are chiefly composed of Magoussy trees, which are now beginning to be covered with spring foliage of the loveliest shades of pink, crimson, and orange. They vary enormously in colour, for no apparent reason. The old leaves (which in shape are rather like those of *Berberis mahonia*, but are less glossy, without prickles and have no terminal leaflets) fall only a few days before the new ones come out. There are also numbers of wild orange-trees; but they are of a different species to the European one. The oranges are nearly all green just now, and as the trees are deciduous and are losing their leaves, the fruit is very conspicuous, and the general effect very beautiful. Mr. Fitzwilliam counted over 350 oranges on one tree, but this is a very exceptional number.

When you leave the track (which keeps along

the highest ground to avoid the boggy hollows on either side) you come to undulating country, with patches of wood alternating with wide grassy glades, and dotted with granite kopjes. These are just heaps of huge boulder-shaped rocks piled one above the other in the most extraordinary and fantastic manner. Sometimes they look as though artificially placed by some giant hand, but as each boulder is as big as a house, even the Titans would have found them difficult to manipulate. Often they appear so insecurely poised one upon the other that their remaining in position seems contrary to the laws of nature. The Mashuna kraals are usually built on these kopjes for the sake of defence; and the native grain-stores, which are like miniature huts, are perched on the most inaccessible parts of the rocks. The "Kaffir booms,"[1] with their magnificent scarlet flowers, look gorgeous when growing, as they habitually do, among the boulders.

One great advantage of being in the granite country is that the water is always soft, and our

[1] *Erythrina Caffra*, a tree flowering when bare of leaves.

GRANITE ROCKS BETWEEN VICTORIA AND SALISBURY.

hands, which in the earlier part of our journey were like nutmeg-graters, and our nails which could never be kept from breaking and splitting, are now more like those of civilised beings. Moreover, the sand of the roads, though deep, is also heavy, and does not fly up and penetrate everything as the dust did during the first few weeks of our trekking. There is usually plenty of water to be had now, slightly milky-looking, but ideal compared to the filthy muddy mixture we endured in Bechuanaland. The air (as it has been throughout the journey) is very dry and deliciously bracing and invigorating, though the sun is too hot for my taste. We have had an occasional gray day, but no rain since we left Marizani, beyond once or twice a few spattering drops; and probably there will be none before we leave the country. Indeed, all I have to complain of is the monotony of the perpetual blue sky. I have, contrary to my ideas of a tropical climate, never seen the sky so rich and dark a blue as it often is at home. As to health, we are all robust, and I have never felt better in

my life. The open-air life is most enjoyable, and there is almost too much to look at and think about, wherever one goes.

Our former record of speed was by no means kept up between Victoria and here, for the roads were mostly very deep sand, which is very hard on the oxen. The natural hay of the veldt is also beginning to lose its nourishing qualities, so that the poor animals get more work and less food than before. Gradually we had to take out one bullock after another from the spans, because they got exhausted and kept lying down every few minutes. Two had eventually to be shot, and now we are about to leave the men's waggon here and go on with only the other two, leaving eight oxen behind, and taking on the remainder. The span in the ladies' waggon is still all right, the weight to drag being so much less, and suitable for the small hardy Mashuna oxen which now pull it. The six oxen which were too exhausted to remain in the spans were driven behind each day by our Mashuna boy Mumbu, who is the butt of all the other "boys." He

has gradually accumulated a large number of ragged old sacks, which are disposed about his person till his appearance has become quite Falstaffian, and thus attired, with his two hands spread out over his chest, he walks along, his face suffused with the most completely self-satisfied grin that I ever saw. Occasionally one of the oxen he was driving was put into the span for a short time in exchange for another, and then he complained bitterly that they had taken one of *his* oxen away, and given him instead a beast that could hardly walk.

We constantly hear now of there being lions about. An ox at a farm we passed was said to have been killed by one a week before, and at the Umfuli Drift, a little further on, two oxen had been taken by them from a waggon outspanned there. But *we* never see or hear them. We have got quite callous as regards such stories now. We walk at nights out of sight of the waggons. If we hear howls we say, "It's only a hyæna," and pass on. We have ceased to think of snake-bites when we walk through the grass. I have,

however, at last seen snakes; I saw two in one day quite close to me, but they instantly made off at such a pace that I could not examine them. Every one tells you that puff-adders can only strike at you backwards, and as long as you are in front of them you are safe. This I can believe, but when they further state that in order to strike backwards they put their heads upside down so that the under-jaw is uppermost, I find it very hard to believe,—in fact, I haven't succeeded in believing it yet; but every one says so, and it is one of my stock questions to ask.

At the Umfuli Drift above mentioned, I photographed a native twisting raw hide to make "reims." The strips of hide were hung from a cross bar between two trees, and fastened to a large stone. The man then walked round and round, turning the stone by means of a stick till the strips were quite twisted up into knots. Then he let them untwist, reinserted his stick, and solemnly walked round and round the other way. This operation is repeated with unvarying mon-

otony for days and days, until the hide gets quite soft and flexible.

TWISTING REIMS.

About twelve miles from here we came on the biggest ant heaps we have yet seen. I should think they must be fully forty feet high, and

really big trees grow on the top of them. That "ants" is entirely a wrong name to apply to the creatures that make the heaps I have little doubt. As a rule, no one in South Africa can tell you the name of any natural object, but if they do give a name it is generally wrong.

There are real signs of spring now, all sorts of pretty shrubs and flowers are coming up on the dry, burnt veldt, and I am permanently lost in astonishment as to how they manage it, as there has been no rain for months. We are told that the flowers in spring, after the rains begin, are perfectly gorgeous.

# LETTER XIV

Leave Salisbury—Bushman rock drawings—Matabili and Mashunas—Tribal government—Native commissioners—Jim's dangerous snake—Legend of chameleon—Native fear of chameleon—Native game-traps—Rides—Chipanga's kraal—Chipanga—Ruins of native town—Wall at Chipadze's grave—Kaffir beer—The "Devil's Pass"—Mr. Coope's lion stories—A lioness caught in a trek chain—Two more lionesses killed—A lion kills a native—Sad end of a trooper's saddle—Lost on the veldt—Mr. G. Grey shoots a sable antelope—Ride from the Odzi River to Umtali—We are taken in at the Hospital—A native injured by a veldt fire.

UMTALI, 28*th August* 1894.

WE left Salisbury on the 14th, after spending several very pleasant days there, every one as usual going out of their way to make us comfortable. One afternoon a large party of us rode to see some Bushman drawings some miles off. They are on the face of a granite boulder protected from the weather by overhanging rocks, and are done in two colours, brick-red and black.[1] Figures of human beings, animals, and some

[1] There is an engraving of this rock in one of Mr. Selous's books, but the drawings on it are not very well reproduced.

attempt at landscape background and palm-trees were scattered over the face of the boulder, the men being extraordinarily badly drawn in every way, whereas the drawing of many of the animals is very clever and full of character, especially the elephants and antelopes. Having said this you will be surprised to hear that one of the animals has formed a subject of controversy among us ever since, the Greys maintaining it to be an obvious buffalo, and I that it is equally clearly a warthog,[1] and that what they say are horns on its forehead are really tusks curling from its snout. As the drawing is much rubbed, and as neither of us have seen either a buffalo or a warthog since we came to the country, the controversy is not likely to be settled one way or the other.

I have had some interesting conversations lately about the native races in the Chartered Company's territory, and I shall try and give you a sort of abstract of what I gathered from them.

The Matabili appear at present to be at a somewhat lower level of civilisation than the

[1] A species of wild boar with enormous curved tusks.

Mashunas, although they have completely subjugated the latter by superior physical bravery. In both nations the basis of government was the patriarchal tribal one, but with most of the Mashunas this had been destroyed by the repeated raids and tyranny to which they had been subjected by the Matabili. It practically still exists in its integrity among the Matabili, who had a regular succession of chiefs from the heads of small single kraals to paramount chiefs who are rulers over many, and from them to the king himself. The king now being dead, they have simply transferred their allegiance to the Administrator of the Chartered Company. It seems, therefore, likely that there will be little difficulty about governing them. The government they were accustomed to will be continued, but on juster and more humane lines, with a security to life and property which they never before enjoyed. On the other hand, government among the Mashunas having been completely disorganised, the chiefs having lost authority, and being rulers more in name than in fact, there is but little native

organisation to utilise, and hence some trouble has already arisen and more is likely to arise. The difficulty is added to by the faults of the whites. It is absolutely necessary to maintain the supremacy of the whites, yet the crime of the Mashuna may be a consequence of the lawlessness of the white man. Thus, not long ago a prospector[1] had been murdered by the Mashunas. He had tried to get some native carriers, and when difficulties were put in his way he resorted to force. The result was that he was killed, the headman of the kraal stabbing him with an assegai behind as he turned to speak. The surrender of the murderer was demanded, but of course no one knew who he was, and the villagers dispersed themselves for fear of capture. It seemed difficult to know what course now to pursue. It would clearly not do to let the matter drop. Murder of white men would then immediately become common. As there were no native authorities who had sufficient power to enforce a command, nothing could be done

[1] Person seeking for gold.

through chiefs, neither capture of the murderer nor collection of a fine in the district. It would be of no use to burn the kraal. The punishment would be too slight, as huts are so easily rebuilt elsewhere, and the only result would be to frighten the inhabitants, and especially the women and children, who would fly to some other district already sufficiently populated.

Such difficulties would be much less likely to arise were an efficient tribal government in existence. To remedy this defect it is believed that the best course to pursue is to place white men who know the language and customs of the people as Native Commissioners in the various districts, and as far as this has already been done it seems to be succeeding.

We have had an interesting journey from Salisbury here. Mr. A. Grey and Mr. Fitzwilliam remained behind some days, and then rode after us, catching us up the day before we got here, while Mr. G. Grey escorted Mrs. Grey and myself. As our oxen were weak, owing to the feeding being now so bad on the veldt, we

only trekked at night. This had the advantage of giving one more time by day, but on the other hand one saw even less of the country than before. During the last week we passed through very pretty scenery. The Magoussy trees seem to get more and more brilliantly red. I am sure you will think the red in my sketches exaggerated, but the view of the members of our party is far otherwise.

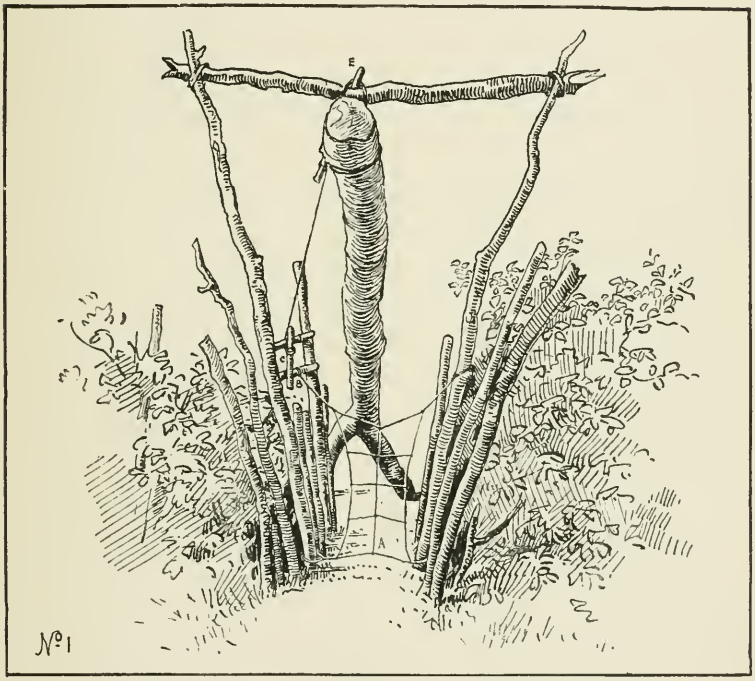
One morning Mrs. Grey and I heard Lama yelping excitedly, and saw Jim, our "stud-groom," running up to her. He had scarcely reached her when he rushed back at the top of his speed, calling out that there was a great big snake in a hole. We instantly ran forward to see it, while Dennison, gun in hand, also came up, followed by the reluctant Jim, who was ordered to show the place where the snake was lying. He paused at a safe distance, pointing at a small depression in the ground. Dennison poked in it with a stick, but saw nothing. We then questioned Jim about his snake: "Was it large?" "Oh, yes, it was very large; he saw it down to here,"—and he put

his two hands round his neck. "How large was it?" "It was about as thick as his toe!" Jim was now pursued with jeers, during which Mrs. Grey happened to look up at a small tree beside the hole and saw a gray lizard strongly resembling a chameleon hastily ascending it. This was Jim's dangerous snake! He and Hendrik were called to look at it, but nothing would induce them to come within ten yards, and even then only with crouching bodies, frightened eyes, and deprecating hands. Dennison told Hendrik to break off a stick for him, which he did, and as he brought it Dennison made a grab at his wrists; but Hendrik was too suspicious to be caught, and made off at the top of his speed, followed by Jim. This lizard is, I believe, the kind about which there is a Kaffir legend, which Mr. G. Grey told me some days before. The legend is as follows: Many ages ago God sent the chameleon to man to tell him that there was a future life. The Devil, overhearing this, sent a lizard, which being able to run much faster than the chameleon, arrived first, and told men that "they should eat

and drink, for to-morrow they die." The lie, having the proverbial start, has been believed and acted on ever since. The species of lizard which so alarmed Jim has at first sight a strong superficial resemblance to the chameleon, and perhaps our "boys" do not distinguish between them. Certain it is that they are in mortal dread of the latter, and will not come near one. They were immensely puzzled to see us carrying one about on our fingers without injury, and took refuge in the theory that "he bites blacks." We asked Hendrik one day on which side of the road he would go if he saw a lion on one side and a chameleon on the other, and he did then indicate that he thought a lion on the whole the most dangerous of the two, by saying "he would go by the littlest." One chameleon we caught had only one eye. I noticed that it changed colour less rapidly on the blind side than on the other, but both sides became alike in time if in similar conditions.

I have been riding a good deal latterly during the afternoon treks. It is well worth it, even

apart from the enjoyment of it, as one sees so much more of the country than one can by merely following the track. The bogs are the only thing

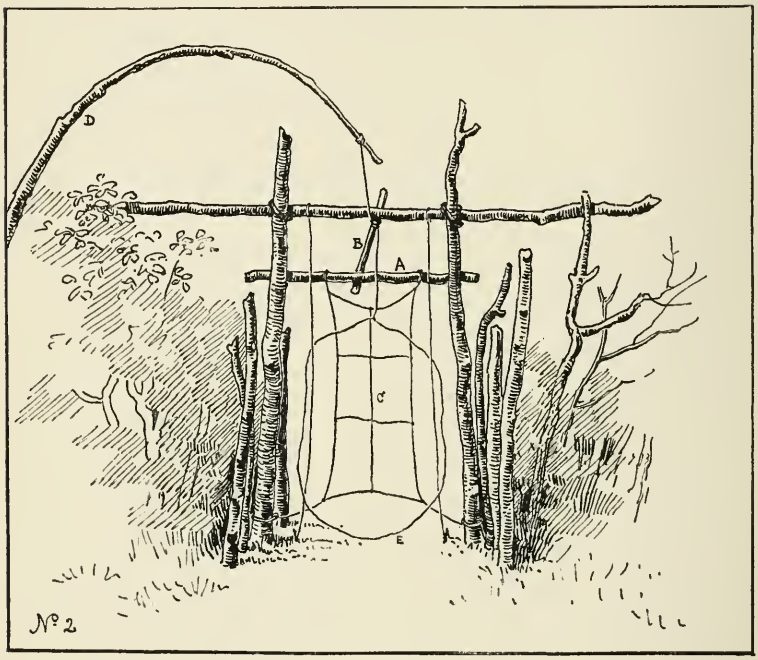



MAKALAKA TRAP FOR SMALL ANTELOPES, WILD CATS, ETC.

The Bark Net A is placed in a narrow gangway through a hedge. When an animal tries to go through, it presses against the net, which pulls down the stick B. This releases the stick C, thus loosening the stick E. The heavy log then falls into the gangway on the top of the animal.

I really dislike. Luckily my pony, Tweedledee, is remarkably careful about these and the innumerable holes and deserted traps which abound

everywhere. One of the first cautions Mr. G. Grey gave us was, If you see a hedge with a gap in it, ride anywhere but through the gap. These




MAKALAKA SNARE FOR SMALL GAME.

The net C is placed in a narrow gangway as in No. 1. Pressure against the net pulls down the bar A, thus releasing the stick B. The bent sapling D then springs up and draws the noose E tight.

hedges, which are usually only branches cut down and laid in long lines, are made by the natives, to hinder antelopes from crossing them except at the gaps, where they dig deep holes lightly covered

over, into which the animals fall. Besides these holes the natives make several very ingenious kinds of snares with string made of tough bark, and the animal or bird is either caught in a noose or killed by a log or stone falling on it. Sometimes they dig deep holes with spikes stuck upright in them, in the middle of a patch of long grass. This grass is often well above my head when I am on horseback (I measured some, and that not the tallest I have seen, which was twelve feet in height), and as you cleave your way through it, it is impossible to see the holes till you are almost in them. In riding about one has to be careful to remember the general direction of the track, and also on which side of it one is, in order to find one's way back. When one reaches the road it has to be examined to see whether the waggons have passed along or whether one must go back to meet them, and one has to note whether any recent tracks are those of one's own party or of someone else's waggon. I was apt to be very stupid about remembering to notice which way I rode, for I was always looking at

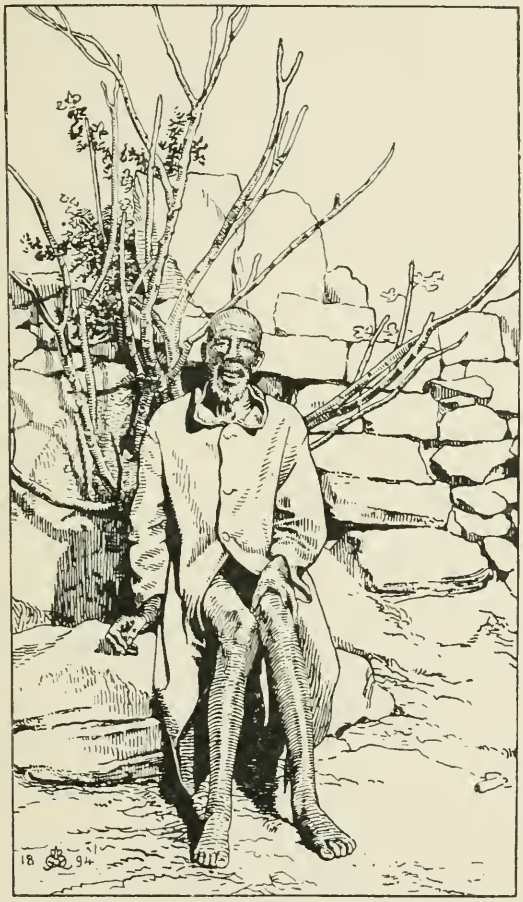
everything about me, and leaving the points of the compass to be noted by my companion. The only time when I even approached getting lost was on one of these rides. I was with Mr. G. Grey who was on foot, and had his rifle. I got separated from him on a stony kopje, which I thought too rough to ride over, and round which I therefore made a circuit, thinking he saw which way I was going and that we should meet on the other side. There I waited, but saw nothing of him. I heard some shots, and supposed he was pursuing some beast, and would come presently. However, time passed, and there were so many shots that I concluded they were signals to me, and shouted in answer, without response. Then I saw that the sun was getting very low, and I knew I was some way from the track. Luckily on this one occasion I had noticed that we had faced the sun on our way out, so it was easy enough to get back by always keeping the sun exactly behind me. I struck the road about 300 yards from camp, and found Mr. G. Grey had returned before me, in great anxiety lest I should

be lost, and preparing to shoot off rockets to guide me when night fell. He had not noticed my leaving him at first, and then had been unable to find my spoor owing to the rocky ground. He fired off his rifle in the vain hope that he would hear me shout in answer, and had finally gone back to the waggons to see if I had returned there.

On the 23rd we outspanned at the Rusapi or Lesapi River, near which there are some ruins that Mr. Selous told us of and thought we should like to see. Accordingly we started after breakfast, riding about four miles to Chipanga's kraal, he being the chief to whom we were to apply for a guide to take us to Chititeke and Chipadze's grave, at both of which places there were ruins. The natives are afraid to go to the latter, hence Mr. Selous told us we were to say we were his friends to induce Chipanga to help us. The kraal is most picturesquely situated on high rocky ground above the river. We were taken to the further side of it, to where there was a rough semicircular wall of rock and stones on the brow

of the hill, and overlooking the numerous huts of the village. Here a number of natives were sitting, to whom Mr. Grey spoke, asking for the chief. Some went to fetch him, and presently from one of the huts emerged a tall thin bent old man, without a single hair on his scalp, but with a thin gray moustache and beard in a circle round his mouth, and wearing for sole garment an old worn out green greatcoat, with brass buttons, reaching well below his knees. Several of the headmen walked with him and round him, clapping their hands gently together as they approached. He came up slowly and with as much dignity as his tottering steps would allow, and sat down on a stone seat within the semicircle. Mr. G. Grey told the old chief what we wanted, adding that I was Mr. Selous's friend. The name had a markedly good effect, and after some palaver among themselves, in which the words Chititeke, Chipadze, Zimbabye, etc., came in, Chipanga told a boy, dressed, unlike the others, in European costume (and who, we afterwards found, had been Lady Henry Paulet's servant for a time), that he

was to be our guide to the ruins. The boy evidently wished to avoid so unpleasant a task,



CHIPANGA.

and there was a good deal more talk among the natives, and then a long pause, during which no

one uttered a word, and we remained spectators of the scene, wondering what the outcome would be, and whether the chief would be obeyed.

Then Chipanga once more addressed the boy, who replied by getting up and signing to us to follow. This we did for about three-quarters of a mile, surrounded by most of the male population of the kraal, particularly the "piccaninnies," of whom there were any number. Piccanin or piccaninny is the universal word to express "little" or "a child." At last we came to a circle of trees at the edge of a still traceable ditch enclosing a mass of large granite boulders mixed up with ruined walls. Here we dismounted, and found that there was a flat space of some twenty yards between the ditch and a further line of bank covered with trees; and again inside that was a wall enclosing the granite boulders. This wall was of better workmanship than modern native masonry, but not nearly so good as the Zimbabye walls. It had low doorways, with stone lintels, the openings being too small to get through without crouching. As we went round we saw a great many other

bits of wall, some better, some worse, some apparently loopholed, and most of them built with mortar, in this respect differing from those at Zimbabye, which are pure dry-stone work. There also seemed to be some remains of modern huts mixed up with the older buildings. One circular wall, about the circumference of an ordinary hut, but consisting now of only three or four courses of stone, had holes left at intervals all round it, but whether this was the foundation of a hut, or of some more important ancient building, was not easy to determine. We did a number of photographs of the ruins, with and without the natives, who viewed our cameras with scarcely any alarm. Every available scrap of ground in the fortress was planted with tobacco. Evidently there was no fear in the native mind of anything supernatural here. We now asked where Chipadze's grave was, and were pointed out a group of rocks and trees between two kopjes a little way off to the north-west. We walked thither, preceded by our guide, but now not one of the natives except him would come another step with us. The grass

was tremendously luxuriant and long and difficult to get through, being high over our heads; and it was not till we came right up to a wall that we realised its presence. The masonry of it is almost as perfect as of that at Zimbabye, but the stones (if my recollections are right) are somewhat larger. As at Zimbabye, they are wedge-shaped and beautifully fitted together in even rows without mortar. The wall is not continuous, but fills up gaps between boulders, and with them encloses a space, which, at a guess, Mr. G. Grey puts at thirty by fifty yards. The bits of wall vary in size, and what I saw (for I did not go round, owing to the difficulty of getting through the jungle of vegetation) was broken down in places, and nowhere finished at the top, so that one could not tell how high it may originally have been. The height, where I measured it, was about seven feet six inches, and the thickness about five feet six inches. There were four graves within the enclosure, one by itself and three in a group. All had at one time been covered by huts of upright sticks, but not, as is usual, plastered with clay, and with the

ordinary thatched roofs. They were all in a more or less ruinous condition, only one still having any roof left on. This one was in the group of three, and inside it were three stones arranged in a triangle, with a large clay pot on them, just as natives usually arrange stones to support a pot for cooking. Mr. Grey saw nothing else of interest, but the place was so overgrown that it would have been difficult to see anything had it been there.

When we returned to old Chipanga to thank him, he received us graciously and produced a large ornamented pot of "very good" Kaffir beer. After our party had drunk some, the old chief, with trembling hands, raised a large cupful to his mouth and drank off its contents at a draught, which was followed by a terrible fit of shake-you-to-pieces cough. Mr. G. Grey then intimated that the "chieftainesses," referring to us, would like the rest of the beer given to the people. The beer was then handed out to each person in turn in a ladle-shaped gourd, even the tiny babies taking long drinks while clasping the gourd in

the prettiest manner with their chubby little hands. Each person after drinking clapped his hands together softly several times, as did every fresh person who joined the crowd. This is the recognised way of expressing respect in this part of the country. We offered the chief some beads before leaving, and he tottered forward, his wrinkled old face quite brightening up as we poured them into his two hands held out together to receive them.

I have told you about this visit to Chipanga's somewhat fully, as it is one of the few occasions on which we had any intercourse with the natives otherwise than merely for barter.

Day after day as we went along we have heard the usual rumours of lions having killed oxen about a week before (it is always a week before), and now they have at last proved true. We have been shown the exact spot where the lions were shot, and have seen their skins and skulls. Mr. Coope, who is engineering a new waggon-road in the "Devil's Pass" between Salisbury and here, is the principal hero of the story. A Dutchman had

outspanned for the night on the road just below his hut, his oxen as usual fastened to the trek-chain, and a number of Mr. Coope's "boys" sleeping close by, when a lioness came up the road and seized the first living thing she came to, which luckily happened to be an ox, and not a "boy." The ox and the lioness rolled over together, and somehow the trek-chain got twisted round the body of the lioness and was held there by the rest of the oxen pulling hard in the opposite direction. The Dutchman fired at the lioness, and thereupon heard some others retreating, alarmed at the sound of the shot. Awakened by the noise, Mr. Coope came down, and he and the transport rider arranged to sit up with their rifles for the rest of the night in case the lions should return. Luckily they did not do so, for morning broke to find both men lying fast asleep, their heads pillowed on the dead lioness. It was then that they found that she was twisted up so tightly in the trek-chain that she would have been squeezed to death if she had not been shot first. Mr. Coope gave Mrs. Grey the skull of this

lioness. She was old and in very poor condition, with her teeth much worn, and had three porcupine quills in her, two stuck in her fore-paws, and one long one running upwards through her lower jaw and piercing her tongue. They had all made bad festering wounds, so that the poor beast must have suffered greatly.

The other lions went up to a neighbouring kopje, where they spent their time among the baboons, whose lives were thereby made a burden to them, if one may judge by the screams and yells that ensued for several days. After about a week another Dutch transport rider came past. He was warned that there were lions about, but took no heed, even allowing his oxen to wander loose all night to feed. This was too good an opportunity to be lost, and next day it was found that three had been killed by the lions. Mr. Coope bought the carcases, removed two entirely, and left the third for the lions to come back to. He had a little shelter of branches and poles laid against a tree beside the remaining carcase, and inside this he and his overseer and the Dutchman

watched for the reappearance of the lions. It was moonlight, and after waiting some time Mr Coope at last saw the tall grass divide close to him and the head of a lioness appear, and could hear the sound of her hungry grunts, and the swish of her tail from side to side, as she paused suspiciously and then retreated. Mr. Coope might have shot her if he had not promised the first chance to the transport rider, whom he now found to be asleep. Presently the animal returned; he fired, and she disappeared without a sound, so he believed he had missed her. The smoke was hardly cleared away before he became aware that another lioness was close by on the other side. He fired again; a roar followed, and she also disappeared, and he could hear her moaning in the grass a little way off. At the same time a third lion bounded away into the bush. Next morning the first lioness was found shot through the head and lying just where she had stood, about five yards off. The second had gone away about a mile, and was there despatched. The third was no more seen. The lioness' skull which was

given to Mrs. Grey caused great excitement among our "boys" that night. Our outspan was at the foot of the pass, and most weird was the scene,—the waggons dimly visible among the tall trees in the hollow, and the blazing fire with the "boys" sitting round it like the Witches in *Macbeth*, eagerly scanning the skull as they handed it from one to the other with almost reverential gestures.

Some considerable time before this Mr. Coope had another adventure with lions. A detachment of police, among whom he was, had been sent out to bring to reason a powerful chief. Their guide was a "boy" whose brother had been murdered by the chief, and who wished to be revenged on him. The police thought the chief would very likely attack them under cover of night, and when their "boys," who were sleeping a little way off, suddenly with a dreadful outcry rushed panic-stricken towards them, they at first believed that this was what had happened. It was, however, a lion who had seized their guide, and he was calling out pitifully to the white man to save him, that

he had got the lion down, but it was eating him, and the white man must be careful, careful! And they heard the scrunching of bones. It was pitch dark, but one of the police held up a lantern while Mr. Coope shot. The lion was gnawing the man's arm. The shot apparently missed, and the lion only left the arm and began tearing the thigh instead. A second shot forced the brute to leave the "boy" and disappear in the darkness. Mr. Coope stooped down and took hold of the "boy's" arm, and it came off in his hand. The poor fellow was carried to the camp, and all night long he kept alternately raving in delirium, or telling them pluckily that he would soon be well again. The lion had taken off his scalp before it touched his arm. Next morning he died, after telling them that the chief was in league with the lions and had sent them to punish him.

Meanwhile the camp had settled down again, as no one believed that the lions would venture back after all the disturbance. But all at once there was a great commotion among the horses; the lions had attacked them, and breaking the

rope which tied them, they stampeded in all directions. The men thought they heard one pulled down by a lion, and then they heard tearing and chewing and smacking of lips. When daylight came they went to the place and found the melancholy remains of a trooper's saddle reduced to shreds and tatters. Eventually the lion which attacked the "boy" was killed, and all the horses were recovered, though some were badly mauled.

At the "Devil's Pass" we met a man whose terrible experiences some two or three years ago had often been held over us *in terrorem* by Mr. G. Grey, when we did not show sufficient appreciation of the dangers of getting lost on the veldt. This man was travelling up country with a waggon, and got lost on the veldt for forty-six days. During all this time he was without fire and without food, beyond what an unarmed man could procure. For days he had no water, and was so tortured with thirst that he went into the reeds in hopes that wild beasts would devour him. At last he came to a small *vley*, or pond, of

stagnant water. He lived upon the frogs which he caught in the vley and ate raw, and on any roots and fruits that he could find; but they were so hard that his teeth became quite worn down by them. At night he crawled feet foremost into a deserted ant-bear's hole, blocking up the entrance after him with a bundle of dry grass. Thus he existed till some Dutchmen happened to come across his spoor where he had worn a path to the vley, and, following it up, rescued him. He was almost mad with want and privation when they found him, and could not give a coherent account of how he had lived all those awful weeks. He has now completely recovered.

Next day we outspanned close to the "Sugar Loaf," a high-peaked hill looking as if made of one single block of granite. There are a good many hills of this type in this district, and as they are smooth and bare of vegetation, their delicate pale gray colour contrasts beautifully with the crimson and orange of the young leaves of the Magoussy trees, forests of which extend on every side. I spent most of the morning trying to note

down the tunes played by two natives on their little metal-tongued pianos; but as they played extremely fast, and could not be made to under-

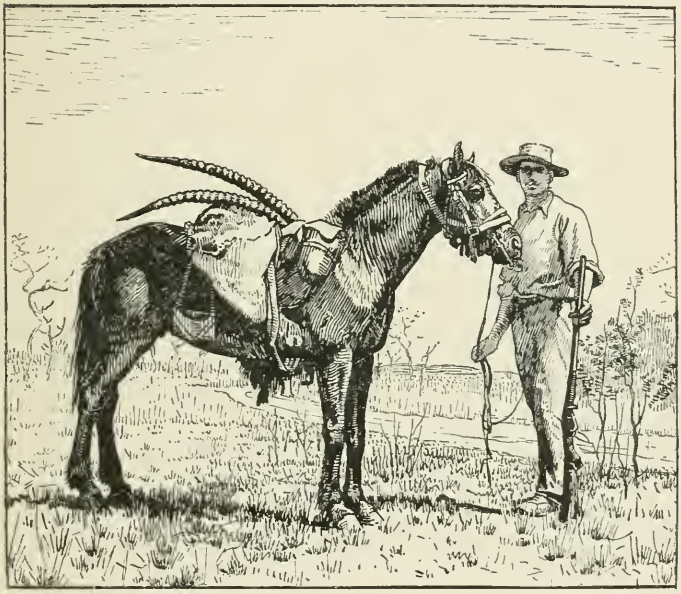
PLAYING THE PIANO.

stand that we wanted to hear the tune played slowly, I did not make much of my well-intentioned efforts.[1] Before we left, Mr. G. Grey brought home a fine sable antelope head on his

[1] There is an excellent illustration of one of these pianos as well as of many other native implements and ornaments in Mr. Theodore Bent's *Ruined Cities of Mashonaland.*

pony (not forgetting part of the carcase to supply the larder), of which I got a good photograph.

At the Odzi River, about ten miles from Umtali, we went on ahead of the waggons,



SABLE ANTELOPE ON PONY, SHOT BY MR. G. GREY.

leaving them to follow slowly. I think I enjoyed this ride almost more than any other I have had, for the views were so lovely, the hills ideally beautiful in shape, and their colouring of the rare and exquisite iridescent tints that one can only

compare to rainbows and mother-of-pearl. When we got here we found ourselves minus an abode to dwell in, but finally became the guests of the Sisters at the Hospital, which was luckily empty except for one "boy." This poor fellow got into a tree to avoid a veldt fire, and it is supposed that he was stupefied by the smoke and fell down. At all events he was found afterwards lying on the ground so terribly burnt that he lost an eye, and both his hands had to be amputated. This is the only case in which I have heard of any one being injured by these fires. As a rule they are very tame affairs, just a narrow line of flame running along the ground only a foot or two high. The grass burns so quickly that you do not often see anything like a sheet of flame, and I have more than once walked across the advancing line of fire. As for the oxen and horses, they cross it with scarcely a glance, only giving a kick out if a flame happens for a moment to lick up their sides. When the grass is very luxuriant and the wind high, then it is a different matter, and I have seen a grassy kopje one mass of flames and smoke,

even the trees blazing furiously. I suppose it is partly owing to the frequency of these fires that the "bush" consists so rarely of trees higher than hawthorns, and that their stems are so conspicuously and inartistically black in colour.

# LETTER XV

Obliged to leave Umtali to catch steamer—Spring vegetation—Attempts to dig up plants—The Standard-wing Nightjar—Moths and grasshoppers—Crossing watercourses—Carriers—Mr. Coope's genius for barter—Machabel trees—Native articles for use and ornament—Decoration of hair—Making a fire by rubbing sticks—Final collapse of the spider—Camp at the Revue Drift—Heavy rain—Last hope of seeing lions abandoned—Chimoio's—We part from our waggons—Start for "Seventy-five"—My machila-bearers—Dinner under difficulties—An ant foray—Catch a construction train—Tropical forest—A snake on the railway—Seventy-five mile peg—Attempt to improve our fare—Parasols—Tall hats—Leave for Fontesvilla—Mrs. Grey sees a lion's spoor—Diversions of a railway guard—On the Pungwe—Arrival at Beira—A lion stuck in the mud.

BEIRA, 17*th September* 1894.

WE had to hurry away from Umtali several days earlier than we had intended, because of an alteration in the time at which the steamer for the Cape was to call here. So we had only time for one expedition—of course to a gold mine—but combining therewith much pretty scenery and pleasant company.

The scenery from Umtali till you get to the flat coast belt is all hilly and beautiful. Umtali

is some 3000 feet above the sea, so the road descends nearly the whole way except for a long hill over the pass east of the township. Here we first saw palms and bamboos growing on the banks of the streams. The vegetation gets gradually more and more tropical as you descend, but until we got to within seventy or eighty miles of the coast, where its character has become too different from that on the high plateau to compare with it, we were surprised to find that the spring seemed less advanced the lower we came, in spite of a warmer atmosphere. Indeed, at Salisbury in the middle of August, the flowers were as much out as at Umtali nearly a fortnight after; and it was only after heavy rain a week later that we saw many new flowers spring up. Among these was a pretty scarlet flower, shaped somewhat like a periwinkle, but with stalk and leaves like a fritillary, over which we spent much time in attempts to dig it up; but as after going down about a foot and a half its single long root never showed any indication of diminishing in size, much less of coming to an end, we at last desisted

in despair. Birds and insects increased greatly in numbers and variety as we descended. There had been comparatively few of either on the high plateau. Large flocks of parakeets now flew chattering and screaming overhead, and birds with notes reminding one of thrushes and larks used to depress me continually by their song; for they made me sadly regret the spring at home which I had lost, and long for the spring here which I was about to lose. I had often heard of the beautiful Standard-wing Nightjar, and was one day bemoaning not having seen any, when suddenly, as the sun went down, with noiseless flight one passed close to me, his long white streamers waving as he went by, and disappeared ghost-like in the darkness.

At Revue huge moths, like our own "Emperor," but with wings five or six inches across, were just coming in numbers out of their cocoons; and every now and then, as you walked along, up started a monster grasshopper with scarlet wings rustling as he flew; and then down he would flop, tuck the scarlet away and become invisible

again. One day I saw a strange cloud of a red-brown colour, such as I had never seen before. It was a great flight of locusts, which happily passed away from us. We have had too many of these gentry already.

After descending the pass near Umtali we came to a bit of road continually crossed by deep dongas, or watercourses, with a very steep pitch in and out—such as it would never occur to one as possible to drive into in England, but which one takes as a matter of course out here. Still, when lying in bed at night, with one's head down and one's feet up, feeling as if the waggon were at an angle of forty-five degrees, while the oxen vainly endeavoured to draw it up the side of the gully, one could not help wondering what would happen to one if the trek-chain broke. I said something of this sort to our conductor one day, when he immediately regaled me with several stories of such accidents, all ending, "the waggons were smashed to bits."

All the way down to the railway we continually passed by lines of "boys" carrying goods on

their heads to Umtali, and returning unloaded. This is because of the difficulties of transport, owing to the tsetse fly in the low ground. Mr. Coope, who accompanied us from Umtali, showed quite a genius in persuading these natives to sell us their knives and other treasures. He would begin by talking to them, gradually bringing them into such a state of good-humour that they kept bursting into fits of laughter. Then he would proceed to barter for the article we wanted, and gradually wheedled them into pulling it out with reluctant hands and pathetic smile, yet unable to resist the voice of the charmer—and the bright rupees temptingly held before them. Nearly all these "boys" carried pillows — small carved wooden stands with a concave top, on which to rest the back of the head. Personally, I had far rather sleep with my head on the ground than resting on one of these ; but tastes differ. Some of the natives had oblong dishes cut out of thick bark, or carried the food of their party wrapped up in a kind of cloth made of bark, got chiefly from the Machabel tree. This tree has a leaf

rather like a Polypody fern, but with many more leaflets—I have counted as many as nineteen on each side—and growing in graceful tufts like bunches of ostrich feathers. It is one of the most beautiful and characteristic trees in the country. The natives also usually carry knives, often with handles and sheaths most artistically decorated in patterns with fine brass or copper wire (probably made in Germany). Sometimes knobkerries and assegais are similarly ornamented. Very often they carry a pointed piece of iron, like a large packing-needle, in a sheath hung round the neck by a thong of leather like a boot-lace. This is for taking thorns out of their feet. With it are frequently hung a few brass rings like curtain rings, or a snuff-box. These last are of many sorts, cleverly carved in wood, and of an infinite variety of shapes and patterns; or made from the seed-vessels of different plants, carefully hollowed out. Another much-prized ornament you occasionally see is an ivory-coloured disc, with a hole in the middle by which it is hung round the neck. The disc is about as large as

the bottom of a tumbler, and with a deep spiral groove on one side, the other being quite smooth I cannot make out whether these are natural or artificial. They are said to come from a long way off inland, and it is very difficult to induce a native to part with one.

Considering how short is the hair on their woolly pates, it is wonderful what variety of ways the natives have of arranging it. Many wear combs made of a dozen or more small sticks about as thick as a match, tied together in the shape of a half-closed fan, and this often fastens in one or two shabby bits of ostrich or other feathers. Sometimes they divide the hair by wide partings all over the head, so that it is left in long parallel ridges. But one of the most peculiar ways of decorating it is by taking a number of small locks and tying each of them closely round and round with a wisp of grass, leaving a little tuft at the end, so that their heads look exactly as if they had stuck on a sort of cockscomb of fusees.

One of the men who passed us had two sticks for making fire, and he showed us how he did it.

One of the sticks was about fifteen inches long, and about half an inch in diameter. The other was flatter, and had already in it several shallow round holes made in getting fire on former occasions. He took the latter piece, and having cut a smaller, irregular-shaped hole in it, he squatted on the ground holding it firmly down at each end with his two feet. He then took the first piece of stick and held it upright between his two palms, and with the point of the lower end resting in the hole he had just made in the horizontal stick, he twirled the upright stick rapidly between his hands, and in less than a minute it had bored a round hole in the other, and the dust so produced began to smoke, and then ignited like tinder. A companion brought a little handful of fine dry grass, which caught a spark from this, and which he held half enclosed in the palms of his hands, gently blowing on it till it flamed up. It is perfectly marvellous how little the natives mind being burned by a fire. They will stand over one while the flames are licking up their bare legs and never move, and will keep their hands and feet in red-

hot ashes with the utmost indifference for several seconds.

Two nights after we left Umtali our four mules bolted with the spider, which coming against the wheel of our waggon was finally reduced to a condition beyond even the powers of the trekker's friend—reim—to remedy. So it was left behind at the Revue River. Our party divided there, as some intended to return by the Cape, and the rest to go back by Zanzibar and the Red Sea. The steamer calling at Beira to go south, started a week earlier than the one going north, so we who were going by the latter route remained behind, camping at the Revue Drift until Dennison with the buck-waggon should return to us after depositing the rest of the party at Chimoio's, beyond which no oxen can go because of the tsetse fly. The Revue Drift is just on the outskirts of the hill country, and is very pretty. Here and there are very tall and beautiful palm-trees, with huge fan-like leaves which you can hear rustling in the wind from a great distance off.

WAGGONS CROSSING THE REVUE DRIFT.

Were it not for the veldt fires there would soon be a large grove of them, for there were any number of young ones coming up, and the burnt remains of many more. During the few days of our stay at Revue we had a good deal of rain, coming unusually early in the season, and we had thus an opportunity of observing the difference in comfort of a life on the veldt during wet or dry weather. It is certainly not an agreeable life to remain cooped up in a waggon, shivering in clothes in which you formerly complained of heat; the wood too wet to make a fire, and with the knowledge that if the rain goes on much longer you will run short of spirits of wine and be unable even to make tea. Luckily the situation was not prolonged to this point with us. The dark rainy nights are those in which lions do most abound, and a few miles off Dennison heard them roaring near where he had outspanned on his way back to join us. This gave me hopes that I might still come across one, but we got down to Chimoio's without seeing anything of greater interest than

a puff-adder, and the lions abstained from even a grunt.

At Chimoio's we bade a final farewell to our conductor and boys and to the trekking life we had so much enjoyed. I felt quite a lump in my throat as our waggon turned away, and only saved the situation by taking a hasty "snap-shot" as it departed. From there to the coast you have to go through "the fly" as they always say here: that is, the belt of land infested with the tsetse fly, whose bite is certain death to cattle, horses, and donkeys, though the latter often live for a few months after being bitten. Mr. Coope had made arrangements for our journey from Chimoio's to the railway by engaging two sets of carriers and a traction-engine, besides arranging with the Portuguese Commandant (for we had entered Portuguese territory at Massikessi) for another set of carriers and a *machila* or hammock. This sounds rather a large order, but it proved Mr. Coope's appreciation of the situation; for when we reached Chimoio's we found that the engine-drivers were

drunk, the Commandant's promises had not got beyond the stage of words, and one set of carriers had vanished. Luckily there remained the set of carriers Mr. Coope had brought with him. The contents of the waggon were spread out on the ground, and to each carrier was given his appointed load, the efforts of some of them to skulk off with less than their share of weight being amusing to watch. The Commandant and his English wife entertained us with the utmost hospitality, and at last, about three in the afternoon, we started, the gentlemen walking and I in a hammock. We had not gone very far before we came on the traction-engine standing deserted by the roadside, the men in charge having "gone on the burst." Most of our way lay along the half-finished railway-line, high grass or bush on either side, and quantities of lovely lilac petunia-like flowers bordering the track.

Practised machila-bearers amble along at a rate of about six miles an hour, but mine only went about four, and as they went,—when Mr. Coope, who understood their language, was not

near enough to hear them,—they sang songs in which the words "Makadze Máma" (Lady Mother—mother being a term of respect among the natives) continually recurred. Whether they sang in my praise or not I cannot tell, but as, when previously bargaining with Mr. Coope about their pay, they had admitted that though tall I was not fat, I hope it was the former.

At dusk we stopped after going about ten miles, and then found that two of our carriers were missing, and those two carried most of our food and utensils. We had some tea, a little very peppery dessicated soup, some very dry salt ham, and some biscuits,—not an inviting meal for tired and thirsty men. With the aid of a patrol-tin, a basin, a frying-pan, and the lid of a biscuit-tin, which had to do quadruple duty as cups, plates, pots, and pans, we managed very well. The tent was put up for me, and the men slept outside wrapped in waterproof sheets. It was lucky they had them, for the dew was so heavy that the tent was dripping inside when I got up next morning. We were off again by sunrise,

only stopping for an hour or so before midday to rest and eat, and hurrying on in hopes of catching a "construction" train which was to bring up rails to "Ninety mile peg." Mr. Coope had surveyed a good deal of this country some time before, and told me that near here he had been waked one night by myriads of bites, and found he was assailed by a column of ants marching across country and destroying everything in their course. Every chicken he had was bitten to death by them, for being shut up they could not escape. I don't think I have ever mentioned the "stink ants" to you. They are the only kind that ever troubled us. It is said that if you annoy them in any way, as, for instance, by treading on them or unwittingly burning them in your camp-fire, they emit a most horrible odour. Certainly every now and then we did experience such odours, but I never investigated to see whether they were made by the ants or not. No other insects ever troubled us at all, during the whole of our waggon journey, though the horses and cattle were covered with ticks.

We reached Ninety mile peg just in time to catch the train, and were allowed to go down to Seventy-five mile peg in one of the empty trucks. For some way we kept along the watershed, which in some parts is so narrow that you almost see over both sides at once. Once or twice we went through a patch of almost tropical forest. The trees were very large — they would look large in England—with tall, bare stems. Some were buttressed at the bottom as though boards had been put against them; others looked like living faggots, the sticks of which had partly grown together and sprouted at the top.

A few miles from "Seventy-five" the line winds along a series of narrow cuttings and embankments, from the latter of which you get very fine extended views, the crimson of the Magoussy trees and the rich green of the large Kaffir plums, which remind me of evergreen oaks, giving a splendid effect of colour, backed by blue hills in the distance. The line is single, the gauge only two feet, and the earthen embankments are so extremely high and steep that they look as though

they must be washed out with the first heavy rain. As we passed through one of the cuttings a snake, which had evidently fallen in over the top, reared itself up and struck at our truck with all its force, falling back impotently, as with the indifference of fate the train pursued the even tenor of its way.

At "Seventy-five" we were taken straight to Herkner's, the only "House of Accommodation" in the place which has no bar; and I must say that the following night I was thankful there was such an abode to go to, for anything like the noise and drunkenness at the bars I never heard. We had some nice little huts to sleep in, with thatched roofs and bamboo walls. On arriving we asked for dinner, and were told that they would neither provide us with food nor cook for us, though they would allow us a Barmecide's feast in the shape of empty cups and plates. Luckily our missing "boys" having turned up, we had some provisions with us, and though I cannot say that either their quality or variety were very enticing, we were far beyond minding trifles of that sort. On the

second day we attempted to improve our fare by buying some tinned cabbage at the store, but when opened the odour was such that with one accord we fled hastily from the hut,

NAVVIES WORKING ON THE BEIRA RAILWAY.

Our carriers were paid the day after we arrived, and immediately proceeded to a neighbouring store, where they spent a large proportion of the 4s. 6d. they had earned in purchasing the store-keeper's whole stock of parasols — marvellous

objects, with each section of a different and flaring colour. The "boys" paraded the village with these over their heads, grinning from ear to ear with childlike delight. It was the more comic as they don't care a bit how hot the sun is on their heads, and anything they put on them is simply with a view to ornament, as, for instance, the brim of a straw hat without its crown. But some tribes always wear hats, some of which are like our familiar "chimney-pots," but much taller, made of grass, and looking even more absurd, especially when contrasted with the absence of civilised clothing on the rest of their persons.

Next morning we left by train for Fontesvilla, the line being laid in zigzags where the ground sloped steeply, and the last few miles crossing an absolutely flat plain just above the level of the sea, and one vast marsh in the rainy season. Here we ought to have seen herds of zebras, buffaloes, and all sorts of antelopes, as they frequently come pretty close to the train ; but our usual luck attended us, and though I was told that the distant black dots were some of these animals, they might

just as well have been the common cow for anything I could see. Mrs. Grey (from whom I have received a letter written just before she left here) was much more lucky. She saw a number of quagga and several kinds of antelope on this plain, and also saw the spoor of a lion on the way down from Chimoio's.

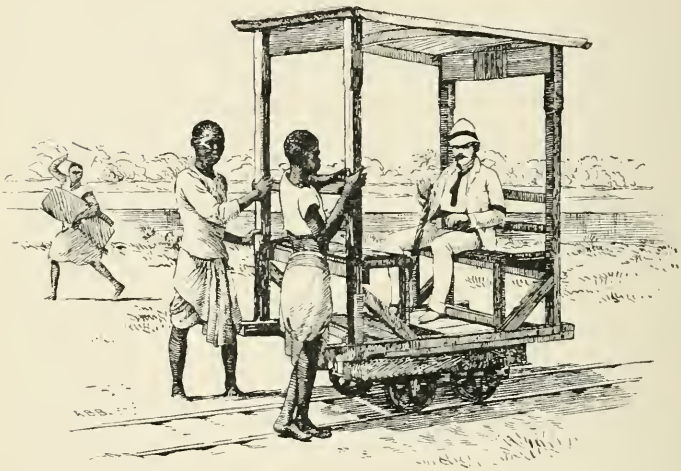
The guard of our train, whose red and yellow "blazer" and shabby gray wideawake hardly recalled the spick-and-span uniformed guard of England, spent his time in trying to shoot every hawk or crow we passed. It amused him, and did not hurt the birds. When not shooting he kept striking matches and throwing them into the long grass on either side, and whenever it caught fire he pointed out the fact to us with conscious pride. He must have used up several boxes in this way. I caught a number of tsetse flies in the train, which were buzzing about just as a horsefly would do at home, but unluckily some ants afterwards got into the box in which I kept them and ate them all up. A little way from Fontesvilla two of the wheels of our railway carriage went off

the line. This is apparently so common an occurrence that some of the passengers did not on this occasion even take the trouble to get out. In about ten minutes the wheels were put back on the line, and we reached Fontesvilla safely, having been nine hours going seventy-five miles.

Fontesvilla is on the banks of the Pungwe, which is here a tidal river. The S.S. *Kimberley* came up soon after our arrival, and we were hurried off into it, as the captain wished to start before the tide turned. Nevertheless, soon after starting, we stuck on a sandbank, and remained there till the tide rose again next morning. The Pungwe is very wide here, and the water is so muddy as to curdle in almost solid masses as the steamer cuts through it. The land on either side is absolutely flat, and very little above the level of the water. It is clothed with innumerable small trees which look about the size of large hop-poles, which are said to be mangroves. These are continually undermined by the current, and the banks seem to consist of nothing but the overhanging roots of trees about to fall, while the edge of the

water is lined with those that have already fallen. White egrets stand in the mud among them, and in one place we saw a troop of monkeys clambering along.

We reached Beira on 13th September. It is



TRAM-CAR AT BEIRA.

not the place in which I should take up my abode by choice, consisting merely of a few rows of houses built on a narrow sand-spit with the sea on one side and a malarious marsh on the other. The streets are deep in sand, into which one sinks to

one's ankles at every step. The only mode of locomotion besides walking (and you may imagine one does not indulge much in that with a tropical sun overhead and the before-mentioned sand underfoot) is in funny little tram-cars pushed by native "boys"; and every now and then the sand so clogs the lines that the "boy" has to clear it off before you can proceed further. I photographed one of the cars, at the same time catching a terrified youth in the distance, who was making off as fast as he could when he saw the camera. We are lodged at the British Consulate, where we are living in unaccustomed luxury, waiting for the northward-bound steamer to take us home.

Four days after we came down the Pungwe, some "boys" going along in a boat some miles above the town, saw a lion half sunk in the soft mud at the edge of the river, so they rowed up to him, and as he could not extricate himself, they beat him to death with their oars, and brought him down to Beira. Is it not provoking to think that if we had come down four days later we

should have seen him? As it is, I have spent five months in the country without seeing either lion, crocodile, or hippopotamus. What has been the use of coming to Africa!

## LETTER XVI

Beira to Zanzibar — Mozambique — Mr. Hunt's lion-shooting — Dar es Salaam—The German *v.* the English system—Convicts—Arab graveyard—Native canoes and fishermen—Delay in unloading cargo—A native ferry—Baobabs—The market—Manioc—Musical instrument—First sight of Zanzibar.

THE BRITISH AGENCY, ZANZIBAR,
*30th September* 1894.

WE have at last arrived, having spent ten days in getting here from Beira. The delays seem endless. Our steamer (the *Reichstag*) was late in arriving at Beira, late in leaving Mozambique, later in leaving Dar es Salaam, and was finally so late in getting here that she could not afford to remain the usual three days, so we have left her, and intend to go on in one of the French *Messageries* boats shortly expected from Madagascar. The *Reichstag* is principally a trading vessel, and her export cargo seems to consist almost entirely of earthenware drain-pipes, while

her import cargo is chiefly ground nuts, which she takes in at nearly every port along this coast, and which are carried to France and Germany for the manufacture of the "purest olive" oil!

We spent two days at Mozambique. The island is a coral rock, and is covered with buildings, of which the prison is the only one I saw with any pretensions to architectural merit. It was formerly the town hall, but having been condemned as hopelessly insanitary, was therefore obviously suitable for a prison. At the end of the island (which is only two or three hundred yards wide) is the native town of endless low, thatched huts, crammed together and interspersed with palms and fig trees. This is some ten feet or more below the original level of the coral rock, which has been quarried out to get lime. The road goes right along at the original level, so that you look down on the roof of the huts as you walk. The population is most mixed, natives of sorts, Hindus, Mahomedans, and Europeans of many nationalities. There are at present only five Englishmen living on the island, and each

one professes a different form of church worship. I am told that the Portuguese occupation of the mainland is little more than nominal, and that an Englishman can land alone to shoot where a Portuguese dare not go without a guard.

At Mozambique an additional passenger came on board, a Mr. Hunt, who has been thirteen months senior lieutenant of the gunboats on the Zambesi, where he has had a lot of shooting. One day he shot five lions within two hours. The first, an old lioness, was eating a young zebra when he came upon her and shot her. Most of his "boys" had fled up a tree, and even when she was dead refused to leave it, whereby he knew there was something still in the long grass which alarmed them, and presently perceived four other lions, almost full grown, coming towards him. He signed to his gun-carrier to bring his rifles, which the "boy" courageously did, passing, in order to do so, within about thirty yards of the lions. In about ten minutes Mr. Hunt had killed the four.

We reached Dar es Salaam, the German

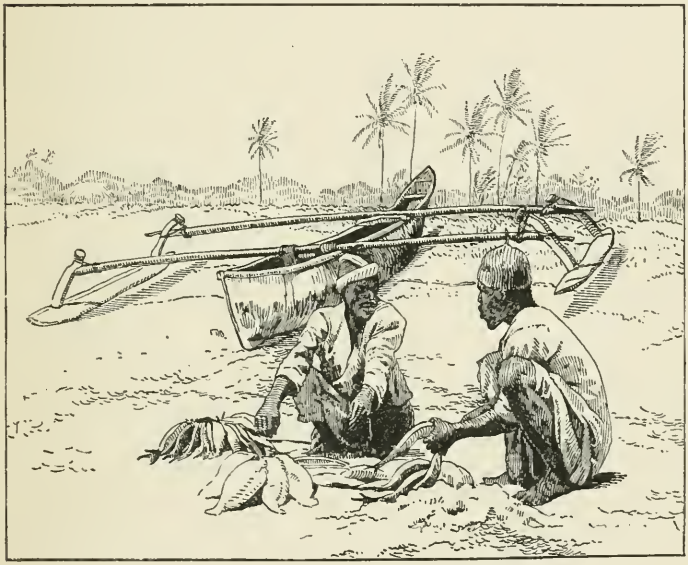
capital, on the 26th. It is situated out of sight of the open sea, on a narrow land-locked harbour, the passage to which in one part is only 170 yards wide. The town is a remarkable production to be the work of only three years, but somehow it looks more like a German watering-place than anything else; and in the European quarter there is hardly any sign of trade or business going on. One cannot help contrasting it with such a place as Bulawayo, where you have a few mud huts, a few iron roofs, officials in shirt sleeves, and a general air of bustle and "go-aheadness"; work being paramount and appearances ignored. Here, on the contrary, are many large buildings, concrete roads, ornamental gardens, officers in spotless uniforms, much clicking of heels and bowing, but nothing else. The resemblance to a watering-place is not lessened by the presence of a kiosk in the public gardens, which we thought was meant for a band, and approached accordingly. Then we concluded that it was really an open-air court of justice, and that either the Germans must be very strict, or the natives

exceedingly lax in their ideas of law and order, for the place was crammed with culprits, and we did not see one of them let off. It was also a shock to our English ideas to see numbers of native women working on the roads, and being driven to their work by a white man carrying a large raw-hide whip. I became daily more astonished at the number of convicts or prisoners. Everywhere you came upon gangs of four to eight—often women—chained together by the necks, and hounded along by a black policeman or soldier. I should think there were fewer prisoners in all the Chartered Company's territories than in this one little town. As we wandered along we came upon the man who superintended the making of the concrete road. He rode a donkey, with a big whip in his hand. Behind came an attendant carrying his crutches; then two more carrying white nets like butterfly nets, with long handles, followed by another pair carrying a number of boxes, presumably to hold the butterflies when caught. But where the butterflies were that were to be captured, or how

they were to be caught by the lame rider, did not appear. I believe he had been mutilated in one of the many small wars with the natives of the interior. Beyond the town was an old Arab graveyard, overhanging the sea, full of concrete tombs of large size and fantastic forms, with common china or earthenware plates embedded in their walls by way of ornament. They are all getting broken and dilapidated now. I should think the sea is encroaching on the place too, as the tombs are very near the edge of the cliff, and human bones stick out from the face of it. The cliff itself is partly coral rock and partly a shell beach. The cocoanut palms grow down almost to high water mark, and the effect of the long promontories covered with them, blue sea and white sand in front and sunset sky with long lines of purple cloud behind, was very beautiful, and made one realise that one was actually in the Tropics.

Next day we walked again along the shore, watching the canoes coming in with little cargoes of fish. Most of these canoes are hollowed out

of the trunk of a tree, and have no keel. To steady them they usually have outriggers, which project for several feet, supporting boards resting flat on the water on each side of the canoe, and



NATIVE CANOE, DAR ES SALAAM.

lying parallel to its length. The moment the fishermen landed they squatted on the shore and commenced scraping the scales off the fish, sorting them in heaps and then burying them in the sand. Some of the fish were coloured with patches of bright cobalt blue round each scale,

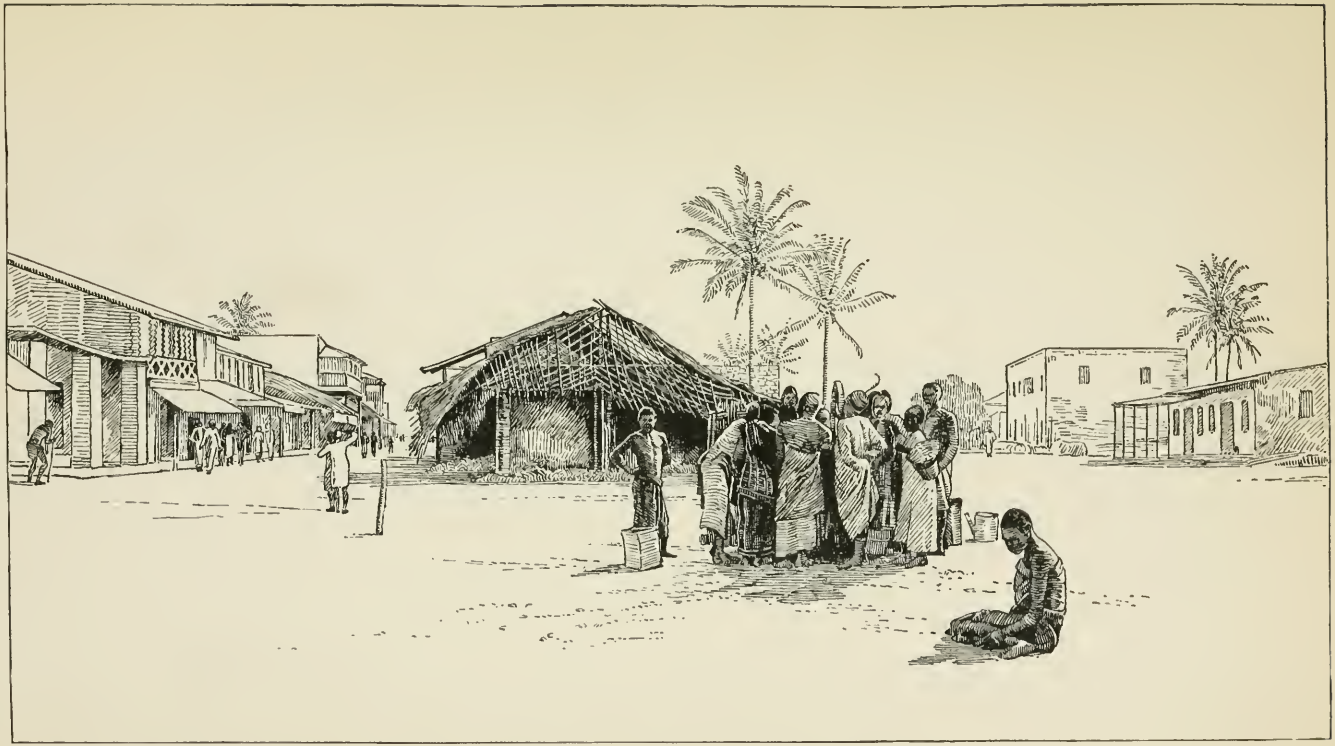
and others were beautifully tinted with scarlet and rose colour.

Our steamer was kept dawdling at Dar es Salaam day after day, owing to there being only one or two lighters available for landing the drain-pipes brought out from Germany. The Captain was disgusted with the delay, and complained bitterly, saying he hated the place, for "here there is too moch drink; oh, it is terrible." Certainly I never saw a beach so strewn with broken bottles, or a pavement so covered with old corks. The ship's officers employed their spare time in flying kites. Meanwhile we gradually extended our walks further afield. One of these was to see some Baobab trees on the opposite side of the harbour. To get to them we walked along the shore some way to where we were told there was a ferry; but the only thing visible in the nature of a boat was a native canoe. Inquiry showed that this was the ferry-boat, and with some qualms we stepped in. I have now been in many unexpected situations in the course of my life, but I think the one I least anticipated was to find myself in a dug-out

canoe (such as I associated with the cannibal tales of my childhood) on the bosom of the Indian Ocean. To my surprise she was far more steady than an ordinary rowing-boat, and in fact was exceedingly comfortable for the person seated as I was on the one little thwart. Perhaps Mr. Fitzwilliam, who had to sit on the two sharp edges of the canoe where it narrowed close to the bows, would not quite endorse my opinion of its comfort. The little vessel was only about fourteen inches wide at the widest part, about eighteen inches deep, and eighteen feet long. A Swahili native in turban and loin-cloth propelled her by means of a single paddle with a long wide blade. It would not have been possible to row owing to the outriggers. The Baobabs were well worth seeing. We measured one which was about fifty-four feet in circumference at about five feet from the ground. If only the branches were as large in proportion as the trunk, what magnificent trees they would be! But they seem to expend all their energy of growth before they attempt branches, which are almost as small in proportion as the

hairs of a man's head are to the rest of his body.

Our last walk was through the native quarter of the town, which was as lively and picturesquely East African as the European quarter is the reverse. The market buildings, consisting of many rows of pillars, evidently of Arab workmanship, are spoiled by a new corrugated iron roof. Beneath it the whole space is filled up with Swahilis, Arabs, and other coloured men displaying their goods on the ground. Stinking fish was the commonest of the articles for sale. One man had a quantity of nasty-looking white stuff just like bits of old rotten bleached bones. When he saw me looking puzzled over this he took up a piece and began to eat it with relish. I afterwards found it was Manioc, or, as the Zanzibaris call it, "Mahogo." It is the roasted root of a shrub with a leaf somewhat of the shape of a Japanese maple, only larger, and is much used as a substitute for bread about here. You see fields of this plant wherever there is much cultivation. One of our party bought a native musical instru-



A GOSSIP AT THE WELL. NATIVE QUARTER, DAR ES SALAAM.

ment in the market, consisting of a piece of thin flat wood about eighteen inches long and about two inches wide, on which were stretched two strings tied at one end to little projections of wood, and at the other to a bit of quill placed transversely on the wood. This was fastened near one end to the bottom of the outside of a bowl-shaped calabash. The player rests the flat circular rim of the calabash against his chest, the slip of wood on which the strings are stretched pointing downwards, and then he twangs away on his two strings, merrily if not musically.

The voyage from Dar es Salaam to Zanzibar was only four hours long. We could very soon see the island on the starboard bow, and soon after the higher buildings of the town appeared to rise mysteriously out of the sea beyond the horizon. Small *dhows* and outrigger canoes were dotted about everywhere. The Sultan's palace, an ugly square building, looking as if it was built entirely of white painted iron, stands out most conspicuously, and mars the general effect. The English Agency, an old Arab house built right on

the sea, is really picturesque. We landed at once, and were received by Mr. Hardinge, who most kindly sent, as soon as the ship was anchored, to ask us to stay with him.

# LETTER XVII

Zanzibar—Driving in the streets—Driving in the country—Jibbing—Clove plantations—Revenue from sale of cloves—Mangos and palms—Slaves—Shops—Swahili dress—Rain storm—A native feast—Start for home—Crossing the line—Male nurses—A French *député's* views on titles—Youthful enthusiasm—The Red Sea—The end.

On board the M.M. Steamer
*Ava* in the Red Sea,
16*th October* 1894.

Zanzibar is the first place I have ever seen which one would describe as "Eastern," and I have immediately fallen under the charm. The climate leaves much to be desired, and one could dispense with the mosquitos; but for a casual visitor these are minor ills,—at any rate when you are lodged in luxury as I was at the Agency, with seven windows open day and night, and a mosquito net enclosing a space as large as an ordinary room. The narrow tortuous streets, the high houses with fine carved doorways from Bombay, studded with huge bronze bosses, and

the numbers of people of all colours, types, and costumes, who crowd the pavement, are perfectly fascinating. There is only one way through the town where a carriage can go, and that was only made possible a few years ago when the Sultan pulled down buildings and cut off corners with high-handed recklessness. Even there it is only by shouts, "In the name of God," that a passage can be cleared; and donkeys and goats, who unfortunately don't understand Arabic, are apt to get severely banged by the carriage as it passes. If the driving inside the town is peculiar it is even more so outside. No Europeans appear to possess horses and carriages of their own: they always use the Sultan's. The horses are not particularly well broken in, and the drivers, who are mostly Hindus, might be improved. As long as the road is quite hard and flat all goes well, but whenever you come to a sandy place or a gentle upward slope, the horses jib. The only way the coachmen have of preventing this is to drive full gallop. As they commence this gallop long before you get to the critical

place, the poor brutes are quite blown by the time it is reached, and there the carriage sticks hopelessly. Then every one gets out; all passers-by are requisitioned to shove the wheels, and after about ten minutes of ineffectual effort, away you go again at a gallop till the next bit of heavy road, when the whole process is repeated. Owing to these peculiar habits of the horses our drives have been neither rapid nor extended, but as there are only three roads by which you can drive out at all, that does not much signify. One of the drives is the fashionable resort of the town, and going along it at about five in the afternoon you meet quantities of victorias and other vehicles, in which the wealthy Indian shopkeepers take their airing.

Another road takes you along the coast to the clove plantations—cloves being the most important export from the island. We had hoped to go along this road as far as the village of Boo-boo-boo—a name which promised much—but we were only able to get to the first of the plantations, owing to the usual jibbings every half

mile. The clove bushes are planted in rows, and in general growth resemble myrtles, but are very much larger. They are grown by the Arabs on their *shambas*, or estates, and are cultivated chiefly by slave labour. The buds

A SPRIG OF CLOVES.

are picked just before bursting into flower, and are most carefully dried, being spread out on mats in the sun every day and taken in at night. If rain falls while they are drying it seriously retards the process, even though they are never wetted by it. So susceptible are they to damp that the cloves from the Island of

Pemba, which is quite close by, are of less value than Zanzibar cloves, owing to the moisture they have absorbed on the short journey from one to the other. Drying by artificial heat has been tried, but this can always be detected by the smell, and the value of the cloves is thereby greatly lessened. It takes about a fortnight of good weather to dry them properly.

Zanzibar and Pemba produce about nine-tenths of the cloves of the world, and the duty on them is paid in kind. The product of the sale of these constitutes the chief revenue of the Sultanate. The cloves paid in as duty are stored in several large rooms, and are kept for the Government by the English head of the Custom House, and sold when the demand is greatest. The clove season had only just commenced, but still I saw a huge pile of the buds in one of the rooms, the aromatic odour of them almost making me sneeze; and outside a consignment of eight hundred sacks-full was just being sewn up preparatory to their being shipped for New York.

The real beauty of Zanzibar consists in the mangos and cocoanut palms — the latter much finer than at Dar es Salaam—by which you are surrounded as soon as you leave the town. Mangos are some of the handsomest trees I have ever seen; and their enormous masses of the richest dark green foliage contrasting with the graceful feathery lightness and delicate green of the palms, was a continually increasing joy to look at, and I could scarcely turn my eyes away from them. Here and there you come upon a palm of which the lower half of the stem almost lies along the ground, while the rest of it is perpendicular. These are trees which were blown over by a cyclone—unique in the island within the memory of man—but not being uprooted, continued to grow at right angles to their fallen position. Glimpses of the sea between the trees adds to the beauty of the drives. Sometimes we passed large houses surrounded by gardens and high walls; and I began to feel just like the king in the story of *Puss in Boots*, when I asked who was the owner of one

after the other of these palatial residences, and received the invariable answer, "The Sultan of Zanzibar." Fortunately for him he is not obliged to live in them all, else his life would be a burden to him.

The Sultan is an Arab of the royal family of Muscat, as is also the Sultana—a lady whose chief amusement appears to be in playing with lambs and other toys that go by clockwork. The ruling caste is also Arab, but with so much admixture of native blood that often you scarcely see the difference of type. Some few families remain pure, and think a great deal of themselves in consequence. Most of the land belongs to them, but they are getting poorer and poorer, as slave labour is more and more difficult to get for the cultivation of the clove plantations. A large proportion of the Swahilis are slaves, and among the women you may always know which are free and which not, as the former are invariably veiled. Europeans at Zanzibar who desire to get domestic servants, usually hire slaves from their masters, and the master

and slave divide the wages between them by mutual agreement. It is said that the Germans find it more difficult than the English to hire domestic servants, as the natives do not like going to them. The curious thing about slavery here is that slave-owners are frequently slaves themselves, and their slaves may also own other slaves. It is a regular case of

> Big fleas have little fleas upon their backs to bite 'em,
> And little fleas have lesser fleas, and so *ad infinitum*.

The shopkeepers and merchants are mostly Indians, and their tiny shops are open on one side to the street like a room on the stage. Inside you will frequently see the wife of the owner, elderly and fat, sitting crosslegged and barefooted in a low wide-seated Bombay chair. The Indian children are wonderfully pretty, but the beauty seems very soon to disappear when they grow up. There seem to be more grain shops than any others, and the number of different seeds displayed in baskets in front of the shops is extraordinary. I could never find out

what most of them were. There are also many shops filled with pieces of printed cotton, which form the ordinary costume of the Swahili woman. This consists of two pieces each of about two and a half yards long, and of the most startling patterns. They are all made in England and Germany. One piece is wound round the body, the upper border fastened tight under the arm-pits; the other piece is worn as a shawl and often passed over the head. Fashion seems as all-powerful here as in Europe. Just now gigantic patterns in black on a white ground are almost *de rigueur*. Most of the Swahilis go barefoot, and many of the men are naked save for a kilt, and bareheaded. The women wear about five buttons stuck in the groove round each ear, usually yellow or green in colour; and sometimes a gold or silver button on one side of the wing of the nose. They are fond of parting their hair so as to form patterns like the beds and walks of a formal garden, but most commonly it is arranged in parallel ridges.

One day there were frequent violent showers—

certainly not before they were wanted. There is no system of drainage or sanitation in Zanzibar, and its not being a hopelessly unhealthy place can only be attributed to its being built on sand and coral rock, which being exceedingly porous, everything eventually filters through it to the sea. But when rain comes the streets are flooded, and the streams uniting from them pour out in torrents to the sea beach, cutting deep channels in the sand as they go, and colouring tracts of the viridian-tinted sea with filthy mud.

That afternoon we walked along the Mnasi Moja road, and hearing sounds of music in the native quarter we boldly penetrated, mud notwithstanding. A circumcision feast was being celebrated with music and dancing. The band consisted of three drums placed side by side, one wooden trumpet and several cow-horns and sticks beaten together. The drums were cylinders of wood about four feet long, with skin stretched over the upper ends. They were held in a slanting position with one end resting on the ground, the drummers standing cross-legged over them

and supporting them by sashes passed round them and round their waists, while they thumped on them with their hands entirely regardless of time or tune. The trumpeter stood close behind the drummers. His trumpet was about fifteen inches long, pierced with six stops. The mouth-piece, which was large and flat, was of ivory, and a short piece joining wood and ivory was apparently of tin. The tunes were only a few notes repeated any number of times, without a pause even to draw breath. They were all minor, and had a pretty plaintive effect enhanced by the wooden sound of the instrument. In front of the drums and facing towards them were four Swahili women each with a cow's horn in one hand and a piece of stick in the other. They stooped down in line together, almost to the ground, and with their arms outstretched, banging the sticks and horns against each other twice as they did so ; and then repeated the operation standing up. This went on without intermission for an unlimited time. Round this persistent but elementary orchestra revolved as many people as there was room for, jammed up

as they were between the thatched native huts. These dancers consisted of people of both sexes, and all ages and sizes, the women with lips and teeth stained orange with Betel nuts, and with heavy silver ornaments on their heads. With the shortest steps possible, they danced solemnly and monotonously round and round as long as we were in sight, and no doubt for hours after.

The Messageries Maritimes steamer *Ava*, for which we had been waiting, came in at last, several days late, having been delayed at Madagascar owing to the political troubles there, and we left Zanzibar on the morning of the 7th. The cabins are large and comfortable, with big square portholes. We have had these always open except twice, when there was heavy rain, the first time accompanied with a squall of wind blowing the rain right over the cabin like spray. The stewardess, an elderly stout Marseilleise, came into my cabin to shut the porthole, and when I asked her feebly from my bed, "Was this necessary?" she answered, "Si ça n'était pas nécessaire, est-ce que je me serai levée à trois

heures du matin pour le faire?" Which snub so amused me that I submitted without a murmur.

On Monday we crossed the Equator, and high jinks prevailed on board. Father Neptune and Amphitrite, the latter a man dressed up in woman's clothes with a great tow wig, went round the vessel in procession, accompanied by trumpeters and *gens d'armes*, with faces painted scarlet and white, and with six devils painted black, with horns and tails. A great sail-bath had been prepared, and presently all the young men and boys who had not previously crossed the line were ordered to come up and be "baptized." The recalcitrant ones were seized by the devils, and all were first shaved with a sham wooden razor about a yard long, and then precipitated backwards into the bath, amid shouts of laughter from the bystanders. In the evening they received a "certificate of baptism," after which there were more processions and dressing up and dancing. Much the best and most comic personation was a camel made by two men walk-

ing one behind the other, and covered with canvas. The head and neck, also of canvas, were supported by a stick inside. The eyes were bits of black and white paper pinned on. The imitation of a camel's gait was excellent, as well as the vicious way in which it turned its head, looking its rider straight in the face, with a remonstrating grunt, every time he whacked it.

Most of the passengers are French, and among them are a good many children, who use the deck as their nursery, where dressing and undressing and everything else goes on in public. There are a number of soldiers on board, and one exceedingly stout lady has obtained permission to have two of these grenadiers as nurses for her children. They spend the whole day in carrying the baby up and down the deck in the vain hope of stopping its squalling, or in attending to the two older pasty-faced children, almost invisible under their huge pith hats.

There is also a large family on their way to Paris, the father being a *député*. After I had

been about a week on board he asked me whether it was my name that was written on the back of my chair, and having then by a series of questions ascertained my relationship to the Unionist First Lord of the Treasury, he informed me that the latter would soon be made a lord. I remarked that he certainly would not become a lord while he could remain in the House of Commons. Monsieur —— replied that after all my brother would not be in opposition long, and when he was at the head of the Government he would have to be a lord,—heads of Cabinets had to be lords. I cited Mr. Gladstone to the contrary, but my friend persisted in his theory—Mr. Gladstone was somehow an exception, as he was exceptional otherwise; but there was no doubt about it, Mr. Balfour must soon become a lord, whatever I might think to the contrary.

We reached Aden on the morning of the 12th. As we came towards the rock it looked so beautiful that I could not resist attempting a small sketch, and was immediately surrounded by the *député's* family in force. None of them knew a

straight line from a curve, but none the less did they burst out in a running chorus of "Très joli; ah, que c'est beau! Ah, Mademoiselle, comme vous dessinez bien!" followed by such naive questions as, "C'est la mer, n'est-ce pas?" till at last I was fairly forced to stop. This experience was sufficient, and I did not venture on sketching again except at Obock, and then only after watching the youthful enthusiasts safely on shore. We landed at Aden to avoid the dust from coaling the steamer. One of the French passengers amused me much by telling us how he also had spent the day on shore, for, he explained, once you get black with the coal dust, you had to remain black for the rest of the voyage.

We have had a very good passage through the Red Sea, which was the greater relief as we heard that in the last *Messageries* boat coming south, two people died on board owing to the heat. To-morrow we are due at Suez.

This is the last letter you will get from me, as I hope to be in London only a few

days after you receive it. We leave the *Ava* at Suez, and intend to remain at Cairo till the next steamer leaves for Brindisi, and so Home.

THE END

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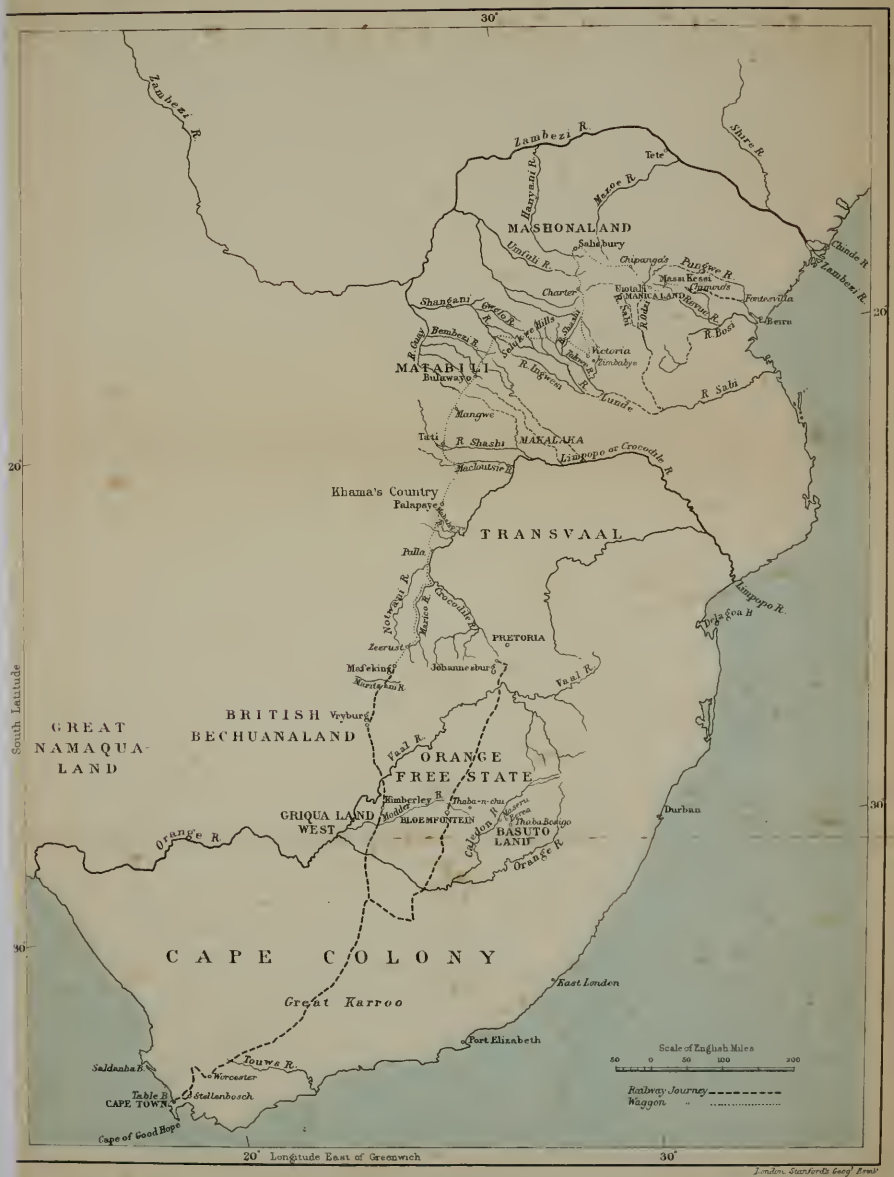


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